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Vol. XXX

# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 3

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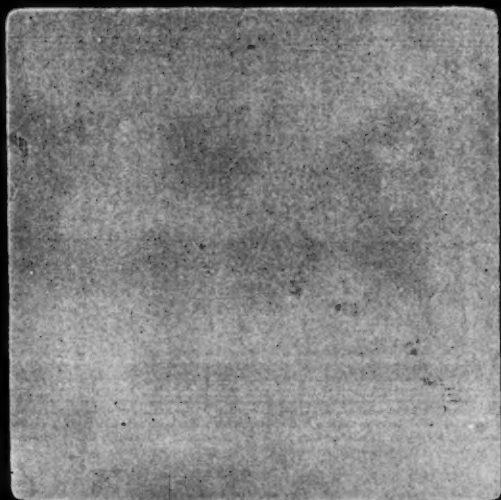
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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 30

DECEMBER, 1919

Number 3

## Leona Goes a-Hunting

By Edwina Le Vin

Author of "Happiness à la Mode," "He Never Lied to His Wife," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

**Hunting for big game—a millionaire husband. There's gayety and humor and excitement in the chase, and also a rather extraordinary tramp.**

YOU wouldn't think that a thousand dollars, assisted by an idiotic dog, an old negress, and an adventurous nature, could change the whole life and even the morals of a perfectly innocent, law-respecting person, would you? Well, I know they can; for I'm the person.

Ethel started it. I never would have thought of such a thing but for her. She is my chum and very pretty. Also, she is one of those persons who can't be happy when the world is at peace. I should never have listened to her.

Still, nobody, not even the blond clerk, would have thought of connecting me with the disappearance, if it hadn't been for the postal card and the two telegrams.

Before it happened, I lived in a big, fifteen-room house in Johnnytown, South Carolina, with Aunt Lucy, an old colored woman. Aunt Lucy never got any salary, but took all mine away from me on Saturday nights. I worked in the telephone office and earned six dollars a week with which to keep up my grand position as a Stafford. Aunt Lucy looked after that part of it. Also, she cared for the garden and raised

the chickens and eggs, and made the butter and sewed our clothes—when we had any to sew; which was when a relative gave them to us.

But I'd better begin at the beginning. When Uncle Ben left me that legacy, I found out what a worry money is. I simply couldn't think what to do with it. It must be dreadful to have a lot of it, and always be afraid of doing the wrong thing, and losing it. First, I went right down to the bank, and found out it would bring me forty dollars a year, and I knew that wouldn't do. When I mentioned business, Ethel said:

"What kind of business?"

"Oh, I don't know," I answered. "The millinery business is nice, and it's respectable for a Stafford; and I could have all the pretty hats I wanted."

"Sure," said Ethel in her sarcastic way. "You could have all kinds of pretty hats to wear, for one season." I was sitting at the switchboard, and she had come up for a visit, and sat on a revolving chair beside me.

"And all the other seasons," I put in.

"There wouldn't be any other seasons," she replied, taking out her van-



"Take your idiotic dog to help me hunt a husband!" I exclaimed. "I should think a bloodhound would be more to the point!"

ity bag and smearing powder on the tip of her nose.

"But a thousand dollars," she went on, "is too much to pay for a season's hats."

"What do you mean?" I asked, closing the line so I couldn't hear a man who was bawling me out because his party had hung up too soon.

"I mean, how much do you know about the millinery business?" She fluffed her pale, pink hair out around her face in careful carelessness.

"Nothing," I admitted. "There's your party." The man was still talking when I got his party back.

"Exactly," she smiled in that "I-told-you-so" way of hers. And every business I mentioned turned out the same.

"No, business won't do at all," she said firmly. I was getting long distance for a big, sandy-haired brute-man in corduroys, who was in the office. He was furious because we kept talking and didn't notice him at first; said he was in a hurry, which was why he



came into the office. They always are in a hurry about getting numbers; but not about ringing off.

"There's just one thing," Ethel went on, without noticing him. "You'll have to invest that money in a career!"

That being settled, I asked the man the name of his party in Summertown.

"Oh, don't let me interrupt," he said. "Please go on with your career."

I might have noticed then, perhaps, if I hadn't been too busy, that there was something peculiar about him. I'm surprised that Ethel didn't.

"What name did you say?" I asked haughtily.

"I'd like to speak to Mr. Charles Brooks, 527 Ash Street, Summertown," he replied sarcastically, "that is, if you have time. Really, I wouldn't for the world jeopardize a lady's career."

I did not answer. That's the way to treat "smarties." While I tried to get Summertown, Ethel talked about my career, taking not the slightest notice of the brute-man. Neither did I, for that matter. One can't notice all one's "calls."

"You can't become an actress," Ethel was saying, "because you can't act, and you can't go into the movies because——"

"I can't move," I said flippantly.

"You have no looks," she continued serenely. "And you can't be a singer because——"

"I can't sing," I supplied, making a connection for Mrs. Racy, a married flirt in our town.

"Because, while your voice is sweet, you can't be heard in the next room. Will you let me finish?" She inquired coldly, and left off primping for a while.

"Go on," I said, "but you needn't rub it in. Anyhow, I haven't pink hair, which is a comfort."

"You can't be a dancer," she continued, disdaining my slur, "because you're too old to begin."

"Nineteen," I remarked loftily.

"You can't be a painter, because you can't draw a straight line, and you can't be a writer, because you can't even compose a letter."

"Briefly," I said with some hauteur, "in your opinion, I have no talents nor resources of mind or person."

"None whatever," she replied in her candid way, "except a high-bred face, a rather distinguished bearing, and one thousand dollars. That's why you have got to make capital of all three—and at once."

My father used to say that anybody who told all of the truth all of the time ought to be shot, and most generally was. I agree with him; but I am level-headed, so I didn't do anything rash to Ethel. That one thousand dollars was on my mind.

"Well, then," I inquired, "would you mind telling me what I *can* do?"

"Get married!" she replied.

"What?" I cried, and disconnected the brute-man right in the beginning of his conversation with Summertown. It was a mistake, of course; but men are very unreasonable.

"Get married in Johnnytown?" I fear I screamed it.

"Will you kindly postpone the wedding till after I finish my conversation?" shouted the brute-man, coming out of the booth as red as a lobster. He was so mad he looked as if he could beat us both joyfully. But I wasn't intimidated. The Staffords have been in every war we've had, and it's in my blood. I simply love a fight. I got his connection again.

"Of course not," said Ethel, taking up where she had left off. Nothing ever disturbs her, which is a good thing, as I have a fearful temper. "There's nobody in this town with any money but Billy Kerr, and he's down in Florida now. Besides, I intend to marry him myself, if he doesn't get killed before he gets his wings. Go away

from here to some fashionable place where there are millionaires," she went on. "Miami, Florida, is alive with 'em."

"Go away, with one white muslin dress that Aunt Lucy dips in vegetable dyes every time I want to wear a different color?" I asked. You see a Stafford can do that in her own town or State and still be "in the swim," as Ethel would say.

"Certainly not," she replied. "Spend five hundred dollars for clothes."

"Five hundred dollars for clothes!" I know I screamed this time. Anyway, I jumped up, jerking a handful of plugs out at once, and the brute-man in the booth took advantage of my excitement to stamp out without paying his toll; but I was too excited to think much about it, then. I had cause to recollect it later on, however, and Ethel says if I had had any brains at all, it never would have come out as it did. I don't know about that; but I do know that the marriage career didn't appeal to me, because I really don't care a great deal for men. Working in a telephone office teaches you an awful lot about them that you don't find out usually, till after you've been married to one or two.

They all have tempers, are impatient, and addicted to bad language. Also, they make love to every woman in just the same manner, which is awfully monotonous to the telephone girl. The only difference is, that if she is *nineteen*, they tell her she is "some little woman," and if she is *forty*, tell her she is "a great big kid." No matter how large she is, she's a "little devil," and if she has eyes like a fish, they just "go through a man." And they are all the time telling some woman or other that they, the men, are "only human;" which, I suppose, means that they are going to bawl out the telephone operator in a minute and accuse her of listening. They generally

do, at about this point in the conversation. And I've heard the same man talk the same stuff to no less than four women in the same day.

One gets fearfully sophisticated, working in a telephone office. I suppose it is the truth, that it's folly to be wise. And yet, thinking back over all that happened through my folly, I wonder.

But it soon appeared that the seemingly large sum of a thousand dollars was too small to invest in anything on earth but a husband. Ethel and Aunt Lucy attended to all the details. Having five hundred dollars to spend for clothes, they decided the only way to dress me, was as a young widow. I wouldn't need so many changes. Three or four handsome black outfits would do.

"But suppose I shouldn't love this man after I've found him," I said in a last feeble protest.

"Mercy!" Ethel lifted her hands in horror. Her nails were perfectly manicured. "I don't expect you to. It would be fatal if you did. Women in love do foolish things and get into all sorts of trouble."

Each day she elaborated her scheme until I was coached for the start. Johnnytown was, of course, kept in ignorance of the reason for my sudden leaving.

"You must stop at the very best hotel," Ethel remarked when I was packing my trunk. "And you must have a past!"

"But I have none," I replied. "And you needn't think I'm going to tell a lot of lies." I slammed my trunk shut, and sat on it to show her I was determined.

"Of course not," she retorted. "You are not clever enough to lie. All you have to do is keep still and the other folks will do the talking. The best way to get talked about is to neglect to explain yourself."



When I swept into the dining room that night, I was at least a striking figure, if not beautiful.

"But I don't care to be talked about." Peevishly I flung a box of black-bordered handkerchiefs onto a dresser across the room.

"It's the only way you'll have the chance of a billy goat," Ethel replied, with force. "Why, Stub"—she calls me Stub; my name is Leona—"you

wouldn't be looked at in a place like that, with beautiful women in gorgeous clothes, swarming the gardens and verandas and dining rooms. You could go there and stay six months and never meet anybody but the clerks and the bell boys. These millionaires know nothing of the poverty-stricken Staffords of South Carolina, and they are very exclusive. You have to belong to their set, or be a genius, or a staggering beauty, or a *person of mystery*. That is what you are to be—a woman with a past! Luckily, you might be taken for any age, and you have a fine manner. A person with a past is always interesting, even if the past is a criminal one. It's better than beauty, and almost as good as brains."

"Ridiculous," I said.

"So?" Ethel scoffed. "If, in the room on your right was a woman who was a great painter, in the one on your left was a great beauty, and in the one behind you was a woman who had murdered four husbands, which would you go in to see first?"

I did not reply. I just looked at her in astonishment; then opened my trunk and began to pack again.

"Well, then!" she said triumphantly. "And a person that you *suspect* of awful things, but don't know anything about, is even more interesting."

"But how am I to get acquainted with this man whom I don't want to marry any more than he does me?" I asked. "I can't walk up to him and say: 'Sir, I am an unattractive person searching for a husband, and I've picked you out. Let's get acquainted, with a view to marriage.'" I was inclined to be sarcastic.

"That's where Toodles comes in," Ethel said. And that was the first intimation I had that I was to take that idiotic dog of hers along with me. She declares that he is an English bull; but his face is to me exactly like Von Hindenburg's.

Funny, what things affect our destinies! You are stopped by a friend, and so miss a train by a minute—it forthwith runs off the track and kills hundreds of people; or a foreign duke is assassinated, and you, away over in America, have to economize on sugar on account of it.

I stopped work and planted my hands on my hips as Aunt Lucy does when she balks.

"Take your idiotic dog to help me hunt a husband!" I exclaimed. "I should think a bloodhound would be more to the point!"

"It's too bad you and Toodles aren't friends," Ethel mused, paying no attention to my ugly humor. "A dog is part of the scheme, and you can't afford to buy one."

"But I don't want to buy one; and I can't see why I should lug that beast along," I snapped.

"You will see!" she whispered fiercely. "Wait, I tell you! Only don't let him speak German in public, as they are suspicious of everybody in Florida. There is a naval air station and an aeroplane training camp at Miami, and everybody is watching everybody else!"

"Nonsense," I said, "the war is over. Folks can do as they please."

"Don't you believe it!" She spoke mysteriously. Ethel is always mysterious. "Only the armistice is signed."

Then she went on to unfold the scheme further. It was outrageous.

Right here I want to say that when you go to a strange place, especially to Miami, Florida—tell everything you know about yourself, as quickly as you can. *Be explicit*. Go into details. It may not be interesting, but it's safe.

## II.

I landed in Miami on a January morning, with Aunt Lucy and Toodles. I had a "gone," empty feeling in the pit of my stomach that food wouldn't fill. I ought to have turned back right

then, for I do believe in presentiments. But, being a Stafford, I wouldn't retreat before the battle started.

When the blond clerk in the big hotel told me they had rooms from ten dollars a day up, I thought Aunt Lucy's eyes would roll clean out from under her wig.

Aunt Lucy had insisted on having a wig of straight hair. It was Ethel who had thought of the big earrings and funny white turban. The yellow silk skirt and the black silk sack with fringe, were her own idea; I thought she was a sight; but Ethel said it made a splendid effect. And Aunt Lucy was so delighted that she looked like that smile that has been advertised so much by an oats factory, and by a movie star who hurdles fences and things, along with the smile.

I registered, as we had planned, with a foreign name—which I supposed was French, having taken Ethel's word for it—Paris, France—Ethel had picked out the name and address—and asked for a suite, small, but cozy.

"Twenty-five dollars," the blond clerk remarked.

"He will do ver' nicely," I answered, with a pronounced French accent; this was also part of the plan, though I didn't know whether money was a "he" or a "she" in French. Then I made a rapid calculation, and decided that I could just about live there two weeks. I had bought our return tickets, so if I failed—but I mustn't fail!

The blond clerk looked at my name on the register, and stiffened suddenly.

"Any mail?" I asked importantly, as if expecting a large correspondence to precede me.

Silently he handed me the wretched postal card from Ethel.

I certainly hadn't counted on that postal. It was as much a surprise to me as it was to the blond clerk. It said:

Take care! Beware! The truth has leaked out. If you fail, you can never show your

face in this country again. Use your brains, and trust the Lord. I'm through. Off for parts unknown. E.

Now did you ever before see anything like that put on a postal card? And it was like her, too. "Off for parts unknown!" Probably to the post office to mail that postal. And, of course, "this country" referred to was Johnnytown, South Carolina. But you can see how it might be misconstrued.

When I looked up, the blond clerk was leaning over the desk, staring at me in a most disturbing manner.

"Will you send up the evening papers?" I said in a haughty, traveled way. He replied courteously, but still he stared and appeared strangely excited. Was there anything wrong with my looks?

After trying to bore holes through my heavy black veil, he called a boy, and Aunt Lucy and Toodles and I went up to my twenty-five-dollar-a-day rooms. They overlooked a most beautiful part of the park, with royal and coconut palms, flowers, and everything, and the river beyond. Aunt Lucy wanted to go right out and pick a coconut; but I wouldn't let her. We had to be careful and exclusive.

Barely had we taken off our hats when there came a knock on the door.

Aunt Lucy jumped. "What dat?" she whispered. "Ah hope dis yeah place ain't ha'nted!"

"Open ze do'," I commanded, "it is ze ice water." Ethel had said in hotels they always instantly brought up this commodity. She has traveled extensively with her father, through the Adirondacks and to California.

But it wasn't ice water—it was that blond clerk. He stepped inside, thrust the newspapers into my hand, and hissed: "The papers, madame!" Then he darted out, closing the door.

"What de matter wid dat man?" Aunt Lucy asked, her eyes rolling.

"Nothing," I returned with simulated



"Your dog?" he asked, knowing full well it was. "Great old sport," he went on, falling beautifully into the trap.



calm. I was a little nervous myself, although I didn't know that it was not customary, in fashionable hotels, for clerks to bring up the papers.

I laid them down carelessly, and began helping Aunt Lucy unpack our bags. Then I made a careful toilet for my debut at dinner; after which, I sat down to peruse the news and wait. Taking up the top paper I unfolded it without much interest. My mind was concerned with more intimate affairs. Any girl would have been excited on the eve of her wedding with an unknown man. But my attention was suddenly diverted from this disturbing channel by a marked paragraph on the page before me. I read that Captain Russell Cromwell, a wealthy young South Carolinian, and a returned war hero who had several German planes to his credit, had mysteriously disappeared. He had last been seen talking with a *Madame Stephanie Marinoff*, who had come to Raleigh just before the armistice was signed. Then followed a long account of Captain Cromwell's heroic deeds and everything he had done since his return, and all that had been done to him.

I sat there horrified.

*I had registered as Madame Stephanie Marinoff.* Ethel had given me that name!

She must have read the story before I left home. I had not!

I was simply paralyzed.

I believe Ethel would set fire to her father's house, or ruin her own reputation, just to create excitement. There was nothing malicious about her having put me in a position to get arrested for kidnaping or murdering a war hero; but that didn't make the situation any better.

I recalled her last words as I kissed her good-bye at the station.

"I wish I were going along," she sighed happily. "I've given you a beautiful name. It's so euphonious. There

won't be a dull minute. Things are bound to happen. But I'll help along via long distance. Write every day, and if you get in jail, wire."

What on earth was I to do? I couldn't think. Then I recollected my father always said, that most of the troubles that trouble us, never happen; so I put it out of my mind.

When I swept into the dining room that night, in a black tissue evening gown, the family pearls around my neck, pearls in my ears, and a single big pearl ring on, I was at least a striking figure, if not beautiful. I had had my blackish hair shaved to a point on my forehead, and wore it straight back except for two peaks that were plastered away out on my cheeks. I had my face powdered white, my lips red and my eyebrows plucked to straight lines. Aunt Lucy was something of a figure herself, in her black and yellow get-up, trailing after me. All this was Ethel's idea.

Aunt Lucy found out afterward that they called me "The Lady of the Pearls."

The dining-room captain, thinking Aunt Lucy was coming in to eat, tried to stop her at the door; but she glared at him and marched on, and stood right behind my chair all through that meal, waiting on me as if I had been a queen. That wasn't a part of the plan; but was her idea of keeping up the glory of the Staffords. She did the same thing at home.

Without seeming to do so, but in something of a flutter, I began to look about for the object of my great quest.

I got a jumbled impression of white tables—millions of them—and green palms, gorgeously gowned women and men everywhere! There were tall men and short men, lean men and fat men, old men and young! And more kinds of uniforms than I had thought there were in the world!

And every man in that dining room saw me! This was certainly a beginning. It was lovely to be the center of attraction! In Johnnytown I had hardly been looked at. Ethel was right about one thing, men marry clothes—not women. The next thing was, to pick *him* out.

But how to tell which were married and which were not, was the question. I felt that if women ever got to the senate, they ought to pass a law, requiring married men to wear badges of some sort. But pretty soon I found out it wasn't so necessary. By watching the way the women treated the men, it was easy enough to tell which ones were, as Ethel would say, free Americans.

I was not entranced with any of them. Clearly, millionaires were no different from other men.

As I passed majestically out of the room, I saw a man staring fixedly at me. He was pasty-faced, had bulging blue eyes and a waxed mustache. Was he going to speak? He didn't, and I swept on. But there was something uncanny about him. For one thing, he had flat feet. Of course I never even suspected the truth about him.

Entering the lobby I saw the blond clerk motioning to me. I went up to the desk and he handed me a telegram. I knew that he knew what was in it for when he handed it to me it was *unsealed*. I turned and looked into the eyes of a red-headed man wearing a dark-blue coat and light-blue trousers with a red stripe down the leg. He also wore a pair of silver wings on his breast. He was very handsome.

Upstairs, I found the pasty-faced man fumbling at a door just across the hall from me. He was apparently having trouble with his lock, which may have been due to the fact that he was watching me out of the corners of his eyes instead of looking at his keys, but I didn't mention that to him. I

went inside and closed my door. Then I opened Ethel's telegram. It said:

Keep cool. Don't lose your nerve. And don't deviate one iota from the plan. You know what is at stake.

And the blond clerk had seen it. More, he had seen that postal. I sat weakly on the side of my bed.

Anyhow, the big husband hunt had started, as Ethel said it would—with a bang!

### III.

The following morning I dressed with meticulous care in a very long sleeved, high-necked, tight-skirted gown, clasped my hated pearl necklace about my neck, hung the long drops in my ears, and adjusted Toodles' imitation pearl collar and imitation gold chain.

"Fo de land sake, honey," cried Aunt Lucy as I started out, "you ain't gwine take dat dog a-cou'tin' wid you! Is you?"

"*Certainement!*" I replied coldly. "There is nothing like a dog or a child to bring about acquaintance. Have not you noticed in traveling, that young widows who have no child always carry a dog?"

"Ah ain't noticed nuttin'," snapped Aunt Lucy, "cause Ah ain't trabbled. An' nieder has you. Reccomember, Ah knows who you is, gal."

"All men worth knowing," I continued, quoting Ethel, "like dogs and children and get acquainted with them—and incidentally with their mistresses, who, if interested, may continue the acquaintance or not, as they choose. *'Voila, mes ami!'*"

"Now look here, Stub," she broke in indignantly, "mah name ain't Miss Amy and you know hit, an' you ain't got no call to speak dat tomfool talk to me which Ah don't see how a Frenchy hisself can understand hit, cause hit shore don't say nuttin'!"

I passed out silently. There is no

use arguing with Aunt Lucy. She followed, and Toodles ran ahead, I holding his chain.

I saw that everybody noticed me as they had the night before, also they whispered together when we appeared about the hotel or on the grounds—I, in my expensive black gown and pearls leading that idiotic dog by a chain that looked like gold; and Aunt Lucy in her outlandish “get-up,” marching solemnly after us.

The pasty-faced man stopped Toodles while he ogled me. Toodles broke away when the handsome red-headed officer, this morning in a dark-green suit and silver wings, snapped his fingers and whistled. That was the first sign of intelligence I ever saw that dog show. By the silver bar on the officer's shoulder I knew he was a lieutenant; also he looked wealthy. Presently, I

called Toodles, and the lieutenant smiled at me in the most adorable way.

“Your dog?” he asked, knowing full well it was. “Great old sport,” he went on, falling beautifully into the trap. He thought he was trapping me. I smiled coldly and passed on. The handsome lieutenant probably went away believing that he had inveigled me into giving him a cold smile, which might lead to better acquaintance.

In less than two days, everybody in that exclusive high-priced hotel seemed to be falling in love with that idiotic



For one awful minute I didn't know what to do. What would Tubbs think if I suddenly began to speak in broken English? And if I didn't speak in broken English, what would the lieutenant think?

dog. I was solemn and cold at their advances; but the haughtier I was and the more I tried to get away, the more determined they were to get acquainted. Imagine a telephone girl snubbing munition magnates and their wives! They smiled at Aunt Lucy; but she was enjoying the game, and resisted her natural inclination to be friendly. She looked like a sulky Zulu. For myself, I was so scared that it was easy to be cold and aloof. I felt that way.

Mrs. Dale, a widow who was not pretty, but who wore wonderful clothes, and talked incessantly about herself, caught me seated in the grounds, and sat down beside me.

"My dear, do you know that you are the most interesting person in the hotel? You are so mysterious!" she said.

"On ze contrariement," I laughed. "I am mos'—how you say?—common-place." If there is one thing I can do, it is parry a question, or tell the truth so it sounds like a lie.

"You are younger than I." There was an odd light in Mrs. Dale's eyes. "And I want to confide a social secret to you. For all that it's so interesting—women can't afford to keep silent about themselves. *You must have a story to give out.* If you try to tell folks about yourself they won't listen; but if you don't, they resent it, and think you have something to hide. And if you have—well, words are the clothes with which we cover ourselves."

"But some have need to tek off ze cover to be seen a-tall," I replied. "An' one must be seen. Yes?"

She studied me with her peculiar smile. "Yes, one way or another a woman must contrive not to be overlooked. If she has beauty, she must project it with clothes; if she has personality, she must do bizarre things; if family, or even vulgar money is her only asset, she must make the most of it. *Publicity breeds popularity, but suspicion breeds ostracism.* Forgive

my lecture, but I am interested in you. You have brains; but also heart, I'm afraid. That's bad."

Again she smiled in that odd way, and proceeded to introduce me to some newly arrived bachelors. She had a way of knowing everybody.

A stout Beau Brummel was telling me I was "a witch" and he was "only human," when I felt impelled to turn squarely around. As I did so, I saw the pasty-faced man disappearing behind a big cactus near the palm walk. That man was beginning to get on my nerves. He was constantly in my vicinity if not actually trying to engage me in conversation. And the blond clerk followed me with his eyes like a lovesick boy. I never saw him attending to business and I began to wonder if clerking was his job or his camouflage.

But it was nice to be trailed by men of all lengths and breadths. They all thought I could "understand" them, and they were not "wooden men." The old stuff in use in Johnnytown!

Only the handsome red-headed lieutenant was different. With him nobody ever walked or ran—we all "glided" or "slipped" or "barrel-rolled" about the hotel and grounds. His heart had done a "whip-stall" at first sight of me, his "control wires" had snapped and he was "falling off in a spiral." He took my "wing" and "ruddered" me over the grounds, or "landed" me on a bench, where he told me that my eyes had "shelled" his aërolons and he had lost his head, and was bound to "crash" if I didn't throw him a parachute or "take my foot off the control." At least he had new stuff. And matters were progressing.

Of course Ethel sent another telegram. No matter what she said, it was enough.

Johnnytown knew I had taken my legacy and gone husband hunting! Ethel's telegrams and postals had given me away.



"Is he going to get killed?" I asked in horror. "He is, if he doesn't rudder into it in a very few seconds—and so are we," replied Billy grimly.

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Sitting in a secluded corner of the lounge I tried to think things out; also, to figure the remains of my legacy. A dark man came up to me and began speaking in a foreign tongue.

I replied in my broken English that I did not understand. Again he spun out a long string of stuff.

"I haven't the slightest idea what you are talking about," I remarked coldly.

"I thought you were Russian," came a sharp voice. I jumped. The blond clerk was leaning over my shoulder. There was triumph in his eyes.

"I did not say so," I replied, drawing away haughtily. "Do Russian mans never marry French womans?"

A look of defeat came into his face, and I disdainfully left them both.

I had to get away where I could think, so I managed to sneak off from Aunt Lucy and that idiotic dog who was taking a fancy to me, and went over to the beach, which is separated from Miami by Biscayne Bay. I found a little cove that hid me completely from view—a gulch, where the sea had washed in, then had gone out, leaving the sand dry. I sat down to have it out with myself. I must make up my mind at once. Time was precious at twenty-five dollars a day. I shuddered at thought of the pasty-faced man, and dismissed the fat Beau Brummel who said I was "such a sensible woman"—also several other bromides. But the handsome lieutenant—

Only that morning he had told me that both his aërolons were useless, his engine had "gone dead," he was "in a spin" and couldn't "nose over," till I gave him "the stick," meaning my promise. He was a good-looking thing—not too fat nor too thin, and clearly rolling in money. You never saw such clothes as he had. He changed at least three times a day. I decided to take him.

It made me a little sick and sort of

quivery inside to think of what I was doing. It's a terribly serious thing to choose a career. Especially is it scary when all you know about it is that it looks wonderful in uniforms, has nice teeth, and lives at a hotel where the cheapest room is ten dollars a day.

A yacht was anchored only a little way out at sea. It had a red flag with one yellow star. I stared at it. Somehow, I wasn't just as happy as you'd have thought I would be.

Watching some fishermen away out in boats, I couldn't help wishing I were a man and could just sit and fish and let my life partner hunt me.

I must have gone to sleep because directly, I heard a splashing and I looked up to see a tramp wading ashore dragging a funny looking boat after him. When he first saw me he looked furious; then his eyes ran over my dress, and he appeared surprised.

"Well!" he exclaimed, which exclamation didn't have any point, only I knew he was mad about something.

"Is this your cove?" I said. Then I recognized him, though how, I don't know. He was the sandy-haired brute-man who had beat his telephone toll in Johnnytown. He had evidently tramped all the way down. His clothes were so dirty they had no color, his trousers were rolled above the knees, his shirt was torn and wet with salt water. His red nose explained him. Anyway, here was somebody to whom I could talk English.

"I'm sorry I disconnected you," I said, dropping my foreign accent, and speaking naturally to him. My, but it was a relief! I hadn't even done it when alone with Aunt Lucy for fear I'd forget when speaking to her outside. "And you didn't pay your toll," I went on. "But I'm glad to see you."

He looked a little surprised at this, and I hurried to add:

"I'd be glad to see a dog from home."

At that he laughed.



"I mean I'm glad you are from home," I began.

"Meaning that awful Johnnytown?" he asked, dragging his boat out where the tide wouldn't get it. "No, thank you—I was there *once*—for twenty-four hours. It was enough."

"I was there *once*—for nineteen years," I said. "It was enough."

He grinned, but didn't say anything. His eyes were blue and his sandy hair curled prettily. He came and sat beside me. I resented this; though, of course, I had brought it on myself by talking to him. He smelt fishy, and was even barefooted; also, his hair was all out of sorts and his finger nails were dirty; which is the one sure way to know a man's social standing—his nails give him away every time.

"Quit your job?" he quizzed, and I noticed something odd about him, then.

"Yes," I said, trying to find the answer to a question in my mind.

"How did you happen to come down here?"

"Well, er—" I said, "I heard your friend in Summertown tell you he had been down here in the training camp and was home on furlough and crazy to get back. Then, Billy Kerr, a boy from our town, came down here to the Naval Air, and my chum was here once with her father, and she said the place was alive with—fish." I finished. I had come near saying "millionaires."

The man—his name was Tubbs—looked at me in surprise, then he grinned again. I don't know why.

"Reason enough, I'm sure," he said. And somehow, awful as the man looked, I had an impulse to tell him everything and ask his advice. But I didn't.

"And have you found the—ah—fish plentiful?" he asked.

"Oh yes, very plentiful," I replied dejectedly.

All at once I was sick of the whole

business, and I wanted to go back and tend the switchboard. But I knew I never could go home again. Ethel says love and conscience act something alike—make folks uneasy and betray them into awful deeds. I wondered, after it was all over, which it was that caused me to do the thing I did do; a thing which came near getting myself and Billy Kerr killed, and did change my whole life.

Like a bolt out of a clear sky, it had come to me—the one thing that neither Ethel nor I had thought of! What I was to do with that French accent after I was married? Would I have to go on all my long life misplacing my words, shrugging my shoulders and talking with my hands and eyes and whole body? I could not tell him beforehand and lose him for a certainty. Nor could I ever explain, after marriage. There are some things a woman daren't let a man know, and one is that he has been trapped. Immediately he sets about showing how easily he can slip out of the trap. I sat petrified.

Tubbs began slipping a ring off and on his finger in an absent, thoughtful way, and I noticed that it was like a wedding ring; but as men seldom tag themselves, and as I wasn't interested in him, I didn't give it much thought—then.

"What is your trade, Tubbs, when you work?" I asked, more to say something, than out of curiosity.

"I really haven't any special trade," he said. "I've been a sort of jack-of-all-trades. I think I might have made a fair cook or a good mechanician. I've a special turn for machinery."

"Why didn't you take it up?"

"Fate, I suppose. I believe I have gypsy blood. I've got to be 'on the go' all the time."

"Don't you ever work?"

"When I have to," he replied unabashed.

It seemed dreadful to see such a big,

splendid physique wasting itself like that.

"Then you are a tramp, Tubbs," I accused him. "A sponger on life."

"I'm afraid I am, miss." He spoke sadly. "But it's my fate."

"You have worked, though?" I persisted.

"Yes, I had a job once."

"Did they fire you?"

"You might call it that.

They were willing to let me go."

"I beg your pardon, madame," he said, "but Toodles got away from your maid, and I took him and came to hunt you. I guessed you were on the beach,



*A Job once! A grown man! And fired. But before I could comment, a terrible thing happened.*

That idiotic dog had found me. He came dashing around the little cove, and the next minute, the handsome red-headed lieutenant was standing before us.

He flushed, and looked fearfully surprised.

but of course, I had no idea—" He stopped, waiting for me to speak.

For one awful minute I didn't know what to do. What would Tubbs think if I suddenly began to speak in broken English. And if I didn't speak in broken English what would the lieu-

"Let go my arm!" I stormed. "You miserable inefficient! You sponger on life—not even earning the right to live! I hate you and all that you stand for!"

tenant think? Already his eyes were very questioning.

I don't know why, but I felt furious at Tubbs for inveigling me into conversation.

"Ah, but it is mos' kind, m'sieur, that you should take so mooch trouble," I said, springing up. "I was talk' wiz ze fishermans. I am fascinate' wiz fishing. Good luck for you catch, M'sieur Tubbs," I called back to him as I moved away with the lieutenant.

Well, if you could have seen Tubbs' face! But I didn't care. Who was he anyhow, that I should worry over what he might think?

The lieutenant must have thought it exceedingly strange that I should be talking like old friends with a man of Tubbs' station. I knew he expected some further explanation; but father always said, when in doubt about what to say, say nothing. So I did.

"The hotel is in an uproar," said the lieutenant, as we went along. "Mrs. Dale has been robbed of her hundred-thousand-dollar emerald necklace.

"How exciting!" I cried.

"It's dreadful," he answered seriously. "A guest in the house is suspected."

My heart missed a beat.

"Who is it?"

"I don't know; but I had a private tip from one of the clerks that they expect to have the thief shortly."

Just here, something happened which caused me to forget Mrs. Dale's emeralds.

"Why, Leona Stafford!" cried a boyish voice on my right.

Billy Kerr!

He was grinning all over his sunburned face, and his stocky figure looked ripping in his cadet uniform.

"What on earth are you doing here? And what's the idea of the make-up?" he was saying, while he held out his hand.

I looked him coolly in the eyes.

"You meestake, m'sieur," I said, with frigid dignity, and turned back to the lieutenant who was regarding me curiously. Billy hesitated as if he thought I were joking; then fell back without a word. I didn't look at him; but I could see the hurt astonishment in his brown eyes; and never have I been so miserable in my life. I hate to hurt anything—much less Billy. A uniform certainly does bring a man out!

When we got back, the lieutenant excused himself, saying he had to go to the Elks. As I crossed the park in front of the hotel, I saw Billy turning in at the canteen. Everybody in the hotel seemed to be standing or sitting about in groups, whispering together, when I walked in, and they looked at me strangely, and whispered some more. I certainly couldn't complain of not attracting attention.

But my heart wasn't in it. I hurried through the hotel and out to the palm walk on the river side. As I neared the grotto, a voice hissed from behind me:

"Where are those emeralds? And where is Captain Russell Cromwell?"

I stopped, stunned. The blond clerk came up with me; but before my dazed mind could find a reply, I became conscious of another presence. Just beyond the grotto, among the low-hung branches of a date palm, I met the pale gray eyes of the pasty-faced man. He was staring fixedly at me. At once I knew the truth! He was a detective!

For the first time in my life, I wanted that idiotic Toodles near me. I called him frantically; he was not there! I had left him on the beach! I sometimes wonder how things would have come out for four people, if Toodles hadn't been left on the beach.

"*Bon jour, madame,*" cried the pasty-faced man, grinning horribly at me through the branches.

"Where are they?" whispered the blond clerk over my shoulder. "What

have you done with your loot? And where is Capt. Cromwell."

I burst into tears, and ran to the hotel. Somebody ran after me. I looked back. It was the pasty-faced man. I got to my room and locked the door!

#### IV.

There is only one thing in the world more horrible than fear, and that is to know that you are a coward. But I didn't think of this, then. I just stood against that door, holding it with both my hands as if that would do any good if those detectives were ready to come in and take me. I seemed to grow old in a few minutes; my brain refused to work and my heart did triple duty.

It certainly is the truth that a person has to get into trouble to find out how well-off he used to be. Six dollars now seemed a big salary, and Johnnytown a town of romance and careers—or it would have seemed so, had I thought of it; but I had something else on my mind.

What was I to do? Under a false name! Accused of stealing an emerald necklace and a human being! One detective outside my door, watching me till they got together the evidence for my arrest; and the other—for now I knew the blond clerk for what he was—getting it fixed up. I hadn't a friend but Aunt Lucy, and she couldn't help me! Anyway she was out. The lieutenant would no doubt desert me, and—Billy Kerr! Well, he had *once* been my friend!

Snatching up the telephone receiver, I frantically called the canteen. Billy was not there. He had gone out to camp.

"Billy," I said, when finally I got him, "come over to the hotel at once. This is Leona speaking. I am in awful trouble, and can explain everything!"

"What's the big idea, Leona?" he

asked, still a little huffy over my snub, but curious.

"I can't tell you over the phone."

"Well, I can't get in town before to-morrow," he began.

"To-morrow may be too late," I cried frantically. "Come now—at once, if you ever expect to see me alive. I'm desperate! I'll do anything, everything if you don't help me!"

"I'll steal out to-night," Billy said. "I can't make it before."

So he sneaked in that night and I climbed out on a fire escape and down a heavy buginwillæa vine to the ground, and met him under a guava bush by the river. I wouldn't have gone through that lobby for a mint.

"Billy," I said at once, trying to keep the tremble out of my voice, "take me away from here!"

"Leona, have you gone crazy," he asked calmly. "I thought that might be the trouble with you this afternoon when I saw you in masque."

"Don't talk so loud," I whispered, shaking with fright. "I haven't gone crazy, yet; but I will, if you don't get me away from here!"

"But why, Leona?"

"Billy, I—I'm lonesome," I said.

I'm afraid I began to cry, for Billy started patting my shoulder, and begging me to let him think. He is a brown-haired boy and very nice, in spite of his stocky figure.

"If that's all—so am I lonesome, Leona," he said presently, with a kind of hush in his voice. "And there's no reason why we shouldn't—"

"Shouldn't what?" I asked, peeping out of the guava bush to see if I could see any lurking shadows.

"Marry."

"Billy Kerr!" I gasped. "Are you asking me to marry you?"

"Well—I—you—that is—I reckon I am," he stammered. "You seem to be in trouble, Leona, and if I can help you out, I'll be glad to."

"You nave loads of money, haven't you?" I asked, after a few seconds' thought.

"Yes, dad has struck oil, and I have money of my own."

It really was sort of exciting to have Billy proposing to me under the beautiful palm trees, with the moon so white all around. It was my first. Also, he wasn't mushy about it, for which I was glad; though it was sort of disappointing, too.

"You're a dear to offer to help me out like that," I said, with icy dignity, "but I don't want my husband to marry me for charity."

"I wouldn't be marrying you for charity, Leona," he replied eagerly. "You see, all the fellows who came into Naval Air with me have married; and I feel sort of lonesome and left out. You're a nice girl, and you've grown into a swell-looker, and I like you better than any girl I've seen down here, even if you are a nut!"

"I thank you, Billy Kerr," I said, haughtily. "I won't be married in any such a way! And I'm not 'nut' enough to come 'way down here, and spend a thousand dollars to get only a stocky 'home-town' boy." I mentioned his stockiness because he hated it, and I was mad.

"Very well, Miss Stafford." He started to go. I grabbed his arm.

"Don't go," I begged. "I'm not mad, and you must help me or I perish."

"What *is* the matter anyhow, Leona?" he questioned, forgetting his anger at once. "Seems to me you are acting the fool. What's the reason for all this acting and make-up? Don't you know that anybody with common sense can see you are a fraud? First thing you know, some crooks will take advantage of your obvious masquerade, pull off a big robbery, and leave you with the bag to hold."

"They have already done it; though I didn't hold the bag," I said.

"Already done what?"

"Stolen all the jewelry in the hotel to-day. And they think I did it."

"Good God!" swore Billy. "It's a wonder you haven't been pinched!"

"I am waiting arrest now," I remarked painfully.

"But why?"

"They think I am a Russian crook who kidnaped Captain Russell Cromwell."

Billy's jaw dropped, in the moonlight, and his eyes bulged.

"I am registered as Madame Stephanie Marinoff," I continued.

"Well, I'll be damned!" exclaimed Billy. "But of course," he added, "you can prove that you are not she."

"That's just what I can't do," I moaned. "Billy, you don't understand, but something has come up which has changed my whole life. Leona Stafford is dead. Never again can I return to my home and the friends who have known me."

"For God's sake, Leona, have you committed some crime?" gasped Billy.

"No, but something has come up—something I can't explain—something which compels me to change my name and country."

"I know it can't be anything so very bad," he said; then pondered a minute. "Haden't you better marry me? That would change your name. Then, tell the truth about yourself, get free, and when I get my commission we could go away to Oklahoma to change your country."

I saw he took my words as a joke. "No, impossible," I returned, "to tell the truth, I mean. It is horrible! And it would get in the papers!"

"Well, I can't imagine what fool thing you've done," he mused, "but I could take you down to one of the Keys to-morrow morning. I have a motor boat."

"Can't you take me now?" I urged eagerly.

"No. My boat is at Naval Air. Besides, I've got to get permission to be away from camp."

I was like the Swede minister who preached a funeral sermon and finished by saying, over the body: "I'll have to let it go at that!"

I climbed back to my room by way of the buginvillæa vine; but I didn't sleep a wink that night.

## V.

Aunt Lucy and I packed, and I gave her money to go home. She wanted to go with me; but I couldn't consent. My future was too uncertain.

"I'll send for you as soon as I can," I promised.

"Well, ef you is bound," she said forcefully, "make dat boy marry you for de savin' of us name! Doan disgrace me, baby, in my ol' days. It'll be turble ef you run off wid a man an' doan marry him."

"Go home and murder Ethel for me," I said.

"Ah shore will," she muttered fervently.

Weeping buckets of tears, she kissed my hands and my dress when I sneaked out at dawn by way of the buginvillæa vine. I couldn't get to the beach, though, till the bus went over for the school children. If it hadn't been for that dog Toodles, Billy would have met me at the dock in Biscayne Bay, instead of outside in the ocean, and my whole life would have been changed.

I felt that I had to find the hideous creature, before leaving. For one thing, I was beginning to like him. He always snapped at the blond clerk. Besides, Ethel's father had paid fifty dollars for him as a pup. So I felt I couldn't let him get lost.

Toodles met me as I stepped off the bus, and you'd have thought he adored me. I had to wait for Billy so I hid in the cove. Tubbs wasn't there, for which I was thankful. I was so nerv-

ous that I thought I'd surely die. Never in my life had I loved Johnnytown so. It's one thing to want to get away from your home; but it's quite another to know you can never get back. It would all get into the papers. How the men would gloat over it! "*Diana Up To Date*" or "*Is The Female of The Species More Deadly Than the Male?*"

Jaill was preferable!

Presently I saw Billy's boat, *The Daisy*, rounding the jetties. At the same time, I saw three men coming down the beach toward me. One was a blond. He had his hat off, and the sun on his hair made it look like gold. Also, I recognized the lieutenant by his walk and his uniform.

"Come on, Billy," I shouted, waving frantically. Billy must have seen them too, for he speeded up.

For an awful moment I thought he was not going to make it in time; but he did, and helped me into the boat, pushed it out, and climbed in himself. Toodles set up a yelp and swam after us. Billy pulled him aboard. In no time, we were charging out over the ocean. That boat certainly could go.

Directly I noticed a moving spot on the water; it was another boat!

"Is that boat coming after us?" I cried.

Billy got a field glass out of a pocket in the side of his boat.

"It's Demson's racer," he said, after a minute. "And it's headed this way."

"They have borrowed it!" I cried, jumping up and almost falling out. "Oh, Billy, don't let them get me!"

I saw the sporting blood rise in Billy's face; and our boat leaped up in front like a pedigreed horse. It was one of the racers that had taken part in the regatta just before I came to Miami. Demson's had won the cup. How I did wish I were in Johnnytown, listening to the men tell the women that they were "only human."



"Oh, hurry, Billy—hurry!" I pleaded.

He didn't answer me; but we were plowing through the water something awful. The spray went higher than our heads on both sides, and the front of our boat pointed itself clean up to the sky. Toodles appeared as excited as if he knew what it was all about. Billy's cap was on the floor and his shock of brown hair looked wild. So did his eyes. We could not see the boat behind us; only a high wedge of water coming like a cyclone. My heart was so big in my throat that I thought it would strangle me, and the wind struck my face so hard and fast that I couldn't breathe.

Demson's boat was gaining on us. I got up in my panic.

"Sit down!" shouted Billy, as if he were speaking to a dog. I sat; but I would have capsized in doing it, had it not been for Toodles, who snatched me steady by the dress, just as I toppled toward the side, after Billy slammed me into my seat.

"Go it, you beauty!" he was yelling. He stood in the nose of the narrow boat, looking back now and again at that wedge of water behind us, and his eyes got wilder every minute. Still the other boat was gaining, and I thought Billy had gone out of his mind completely. I gave up hope. If they didn't catch us, we would be thrown out, anyhow, by our own speed.

Presently, our pursuers were falling behind, and a beatific smile came over Billy's face. It touched me to see how much he had wanted to save me.

"Did they think that truck horse could catch my *Daisy*?" he asked of the spray. Then I knew it was the boat he was interested in.

Just then I heard Billy yell at the sky.

I looked up. A big aeroplane was coming down sidewise toward the sea, with one wing pointing toward us.

Billy began shouting, as if he thought the man in the air could hear him.

"Come out of it, for God's sake!" he kept calling.

"Why is he coming down like that?" I asked.

"He is falling off a wing," cried Billy, and began working madly at our boat.

"Is he going to get killed?" I asked in horror.

"He is, if he doesn't rudder into it in a very few seconds—and so are we," replied Billy, a grim look coming into his boyish face.

I sat still, watching that monster fairly drop out of the sky on its left wing. I had forgotten all about the men in the boat behind us. I hoped the wing would knock me senseless. I hated to drown. I am so afraid of the water. Billy had turned our boat, and was making off as fast as he could. We both watched that thing in the sky. Toodles set up a barking.

Then, as if by magic, the great left wing lifted.

"Ah!" cried Billy, relieved, "he's nosing over." And in less time than it takes to tell it, the plane had moved out of reach of us and glided onto the water. But the left wing came so close that I could almost have reached out and caught it as it passed.

"What was the matter?" Billy swung our boat around and drew it up close to the front of the plane. Billy thinks he knows all there is to know about aeroplanes.

"Control wires broke," said the man calmly, looking up.

It was Tubbs! He was in clean corduroys and actually looked nice—showing what clothes do to a man.

"Where's your uniform?" snapped Billy.

"I'm not in the service," said Tubbs. "But I know something about aeroplanes." He began working away at the plane.

"Snap out of your hop," commanded Billy, "and I'll fix you up in a few minutes."

Tubbs didn't move, but worked on for a little while without saying any more to Billy or me.

"She's all right," he said directly.

"Oh, Billy," I cried frantically. "They're coming."

Demson's boat had turned back to shore when they saw the falling plane. Now they were coming toward us, fairly tearing up the water.

"Oh, Billy! Tubbs!" I pleaded, "get me away."

"What's the trouble?" asked Tubbs.

"They are coming to arrest me!" I stood up in the boat wringing my hands.

"Arrest you! What for?" snapped Tubbs.

"For kidnaping a hero," I said, "and stealing an emerald necklace."

Tubbs appeared surprised.

"Kidnaping a hero? What hero?" He ignored the emeralds.

"Russell Cromwell, who did a disappearing act about three weeks ago," spoke up Billy.

"The blond clerk in our hotel thinks I kidnaped him," I cried. "I am Madame Stephane Marinoff. That is, I'm not; but they think I am. And I'm to be arrested and *disgraced*!"

A look of amazement came over Tubbs' face. He just sat there. Meantime that wretched boat came on.

"Don't sit there!" I pleaded. "Do something!"

A fire leaped into Tubbs' face. He looked like an overgrown boy, up to devilment.

"Want to go up?" he asked. His eyes were glistening.

"Yes, oh yes!" I said excitedly. I had only one thought—to go where that boat couldn't!

"Help me get her in," Tubbs commanded Billy who was right in for it.

Together they got me in the seat in

front of Tubbs. There was another one beside him.

"I'm scared," I said. "I want to sit next to you."

Tubbs helped me into the seat beside his own, and Toodles came with a flying leap into the front seat. Tubbs fixed some straps on me and himself and Toodles. Meanwhile that horrid racer came on. I don't know which I was the most scared of, the airship or the racer.

"Move out of the way," Tubbs said to Billy. "I'm going to take off." I wondered what he was going to take off. Billy got away in a hurry, and made frantic signs to the other boat. Tubbs started the motor, and we glided on the top of the water. I suddenly got sick.

"Put me back," I screamed. "I'd rather be arrested." But I might as well have saved my breath. I couldn't even hear myself. The noise got louder and louder and in another minute we were rising out of the sea.

The higher we went the sicker I got. I started screaming, but it was no use. Nothing is any use when you get up in the skies, swinging along with nothing but air between you and the vicious old sea. All you can do is to wait until the man beside you gets ready to come down, or something goes wrong and you fall. Your wishes are of no account from the minute you step off dear earth till you strike it again, one way or another. Presently, I stopped screaming, and took a look down. I saw the top of Miami. It appeared like a miniature town upside down. I never looked again. I turned to Tubbs. He was staring ahead and his face reminded me of a colored man I once saw get religion at a camp meeting. It was as if he were beholding angels.

Presently, a cloud appeared, right in our road. I couldn't see how we were going to dodge it. We didn't. We sailed into it; and then all things were



*Robert A. Graft*

"I wish this were a desert island we had drifted onto," he said, "just you and Toodles and I."

blotted out but ourselves. It was like a thick fog that shuts everything from sight. When we came into the sun again we seemed to be riding upside down. The clouds were under us.

Billy had said that when you got high, the only way you could tell whether you were right side up or not was by the safety belt. If it didn't seem tight, you were all right. It felt tight to me. The air was funny and light, and there were bells in my ears.

It seemed to me that we were going straight to the stars. I figured we'd have a right smart piece to fall. There was nothing in sight. We were in a blue and white desert, sailing along in a fearful noise.

All at once the noise stopped, and so did my heart. I knew that when an automobile motor stopped suddenly there was something wrong. The silence up there was terrifying.

"Are you cold?" asked Tubbs, grin-

ning calmly at me as we started falling backward.

"No," I replied sharply. "Don't look at me; watch where you're going." We were going down and around, and faster than I can tell it.

"Nothing to run into up here," he said.

I don't know why I didn't scream then, for I certainly felt that my time had come. I recollect thinking Ethel would be sorry she had got me into this, and poor old Aunt Lucy would grieve. Thoughts pass at an astonishing rate.

"How long will it take us to hit earth?" I asked vaguely.

Tubbs moved something in front of him and the motor started with loud explosions, and we leveled out slowly and began climbing again. Tubbs evidently liked it up there.

I grew resigned after a while, but I was wishing he would stop the motor again so I could ask him a question. He did.

"Tubbs," I said. "Please, let's go down."

This time he didn't turn and look at me, and grin, but began working some different wires and kicking his feet around; and I could tell by his expression and by his whole attitude, that we were going down, and that he *had not intended it*. We were dropping faster than I could think, in a sickening, side-wise, slipping whirl, like a spinning top about to roll on its side. We tipped quickly to the other side, then went front downward, and the next minute the ocean was coming up to meet us. I closed my eyes for the crash; we hit with a bump; I waited. When I opened my eyes, we were sliding along on the water as easily as if we had been in a motor boat. Toodles looked around at us and I'm sure he was as surprised as I was, to find us all there.

Tubbs spoke. He was grinning as if nothing at all had happened.

"You are a real little sport," he said in great good humor. "Wasn't it a peach?"

"What?" I gasped.

"That side slip."

"Tubbs, did you do that on purpose?" I demanded indignantly.

"No, the motor died," he said.

"You stopped it the other time," I returned suspiciously.

"How'd you like the spiral?" he asked with a distinct chuckle.

"I've seen things I liked better," I replied haughtily. I was all shaken up and scared, and altogether furious.

Tubbs laughed aloud. "You asked me how long it would take us to hit just as coolly——"

Toodles whined a little, and Tubbs reached over and patted his head. Poor thing, he had sat like a soldier all through that dizzy time. I liked his "spunk."

"Tubbs," I said, "I don't know how you're going to get me out of this, for I refuse to go up again. And I want to go to Blair's Key right away."

He looked at me with a quizzical expression. "I'd be delighted to take you there, or anywhere," he said, "but I'm afraid I've let you in for a rather bad night."

"Do you mean we have broken down?"

"Something like it. The engine is dead." He turned in his seat, so he could watch me as he talked. He was so calm that it never occurred to me that we were in danger.

"Well, what will we do?" I inquired.

"I suspect we'll wait here to be picked up."

"When will that be?"

"To-morrow, probably. I took this boat out on a test flight from the Naval Air. When I don't show up this afternoon they will send scouts to look for me. And incidentally, it's against the rules to take a woman up. So I'm in for it."

"Will they make us go back to Miami?" I asked, thinking of how I'd be in for it if they did. I supposed he could explain for himself somehow.

"They'll take us back—of course," he replied gloomily.

"Oh, but I can't go back!" I cried. "I daren't. They will put me in jail."

He studied me a moment. "You weren't joking about——"

"No! Oh, no! The blond clerk thinks——"

"How do you know the clerk suspects you of anything?"

"Because I came down here on important business and my friend Ethel said I should register as Madame Marinoff. That's the name of the lady who kidnaped Russell Cromwell."

"How do you know he was kidnaped? And why did you take that name?"

"The paper said so, and Ethel suggested the name to get me into trouble. She lives on trouble."

Then I told him about the telegrams and the postals and how the blond clerk and the pasty-faced detective had followed me around.

Well, Tubbs started laughing, and I was afraid he might explode. He has beautiful teeth, which is a good thing, as he has such an expansive laugh.

Finally he straightened himself out, and asked gravely:

"Well, did you?"

"What? Steal the emeralds?"

"No, kidnap Russell Cromwell?"

"Of course, I didn't. I only wish I could," I replied indignantly. He appeared surprised at this.

"Why do you wish such a thing?"

"Because he is a hero; and besides he has money. You see, I'd marry him."

"You like money well enough to get it that way?" asked Tubbs; and I thought he looked disgusted with me.

"No," I said, "I'm not so crazy about it; but I rather like to have it."

"I see." He looked grave and,

reaching over, stroked Toodles who worshiped him with his eyes.

"And Ethel thinks I ought to."

"So I heard her say," Tubbs grinned. Then he took a field glass out of his pocket and began searching the sky.

"Suppose the scouts don't see us?" I suggested after he put the glasses up.

"They will, unless there's a blow to-night, and we get too far off the coast, or——"

He stopped.

"Or what, Tubbs?"

He didn't want to tell me, but I insisted, and he admitted that the boat, as he called the plane, was quite likely to go to pieces if the sea got rough.

So there was a possibility that we might not get back to Miami after all—or anywhere else, for that matter. This thought gave me a curious mixture of emotions. It was dreadful to die so young. And yet it would be more dreadful to have to live disgraced. And this really was an experience everybody couldn't have.

"What are you thinking so deeply about?" asked Tubbs presently.

I never saw a man's eyes light up the way Tubbs' did when I told him.

"You're the gamest little woman I ever knew," he said.

And even in our desperation I couldn't help thinking that if I had been thirty-nine instead of nineteen he'd have called me a "kid," instead of a woman. It's terrible to be so sophisticated. It spoils a person's fun.

About the middle of the afternoon, it began to blow a little and it may have been conscience, or maybe just sea sickness, but I had an impulse to tell Tubbs the truth about myself.

"Tubbs," I said, "I didn't come down here to catch fish; I came to hunt a husband."

"Have you found him?" he asked, after a minute, between surprise and laughter which he suppressed.

"I've found several that I believe I

could have," I replied, "but the trouble is, I don't want to marry."

He looked perplexed. "Then why do it?"

"I've got to do something; and you heard what my chum said to me that day in Johnnytown. I'm not fit for anything but marriage. The truth is, I am an inefficient."

"Then you will undoubtedly become a wife," he replied gravely.

"I fear I must," I said dejectedly.

"And what is your objection to marriage?" He was studying me with what appeared to be great amusement.

"Oh, I don't mind marriage," I told him. "It's men I object to." I noticed that Tubbs used good English, for which I was grateful. It would have been dreadful to spend a whole afternoon with a man who said "I seen" for instance, every other breath.

"Ah, I see," Tubbs said musingly. "You are a man hater. That complicates matters."

"No, I don't hate them," I replied, "but they are lacking in originality. No matter what a man looks like, he makes love like every other man."

"You seem to be quite experienced in the matter of men," said Tubbs, regarding me quizzically.

"Oh, yes," I sighed. "I've made quite a study of them." I didn't think it necessary to tell him I had had only second-hand experience.

Tubbs looked displeased; but I didn't care. I was too disturbed in the pit of my stomach to care for anything.

"Don't you think it rather—ah, unconventional—what you're doing?" he asked presently.

"What?"

"Hunting a husband. Why don't you wait to be hunted?"

"That shows you are as simple as all other men, Tubbs," I said. "Women never wait to be hunted; they hunt. We only let the men think themselves the hunters."

"You mean to tell me it is the usual thing for women to go out like this for husbands?" He was clearly shocked.

"My method of procedure may be different; but otherwise it is usual. Didn't Eve hunt Adam? He even admitted it."

"Holy smoke!" exclaimed Tubbs. "We are simple! Well, I don't mind telling you, Miss Leona," he went on, "that I am not a ladies' man."

"I should judge not, Tubbs, and anyway, you wouldn't do," I said, whereat he laughed boisterously, and began to ask me all sorts of questions about women; things that no man should know—state secrets; but I had no hesitancy in answering truthfully, as long as he was not a prospect.

"You seem so wise, can you tell me why men and women lie to each other as they do?" he asked. His face was grave, but his eyes were twinkling, so that I could not be sure whether he was poking fun at me or not. However, I answered with dignity.

"A lie, in the cause of love, is a surgeon's needle to stitch the wound." I saw Tubbs look away; but he made no reply, and I did not think it necessary to tell him that this was one of my heard-over-the-phone speeches. Mrs. Racy always likes to justify her misconduct.

The wind died down at dusk, and I felt better. Also, I developed a deep respect for that hideous dog in the front seat. He hardly took his eyes off Tubbs' face just as if to ask why he didn't do something; but beyond that first whine when we lit on the water, he never whimpered. Of course, we had no dinner; nor had we had any lunch. But as I said to Tubbs, everybody should fast occasionally, if only to rest the digestive organs.

"You're a real girl," he said. "I'll tell you, it's in times like this that folks get to know each other. Anybody can



be pleasant in pleasant circumstances. You're a pal to take into life's thick woods where the snows are deep."

I didn't answer. Thick woods and deep snows seemed so irrelevant away out on an ocean, in the tropics.

Before the moon came up over the rim of the ocean, Tubbs had the whole story about my legacy, and how I had conducted my hunting expedition.

"You see, it's no wonder the blond clerk suspected me, and set the pasty-faced detective on my trail," I said.

He admitted that it was not to be wondered at.

"But of course you could prove that you *couldn't* have kidnaped Captain Cromwell," he said, "and that you *wouldn't* steal anybody's necklace," he suggested. "Didn't you think of that?"

"Yes," I answered, "but I also thought of the shame of its getting into the papers, and of a person having to go home afterward, without a husband; and being a Stafford, I have to think of our name. Billy Kerr said I could marry him. All his friends had got married, and he sort of thought he'd just as soon marry me, and of course, he's got money enough."

Tubbs burst out laughing. I didn't see anything to laugh at. The wind was rising again, and our boat was beginning to bounce up on the waves, so that I certainly thought it would capsize.

"Well, now," he said when he had stopped laughing, "I call that a perfect arrangement. You want a rich husband, and Billy wants a wife, so he can be like his pals."

"Oh, no, it wouldn't do at all," I replied. "I couldn't waste a thousand dollars on catching Billy Kerr. He's only a 'home-town' boy. And he's stocky!"

"Oh," said Tubbs gravely.

The moon was well up now; but it seemed to hang so low in the sapphire

sky that it was almost like daylight out there.

"That would be foolish, Tubbs," I said. "Don't you see?"

He said he hadn't exactly thought of it, for the moment.

"But didn't you find *one* among the bachelors in the hotel who might have filled the bill?" he asked.

"I thought the lieutenant might, at first. He was very nice, and handsome, and had a new line of talk; but he just didn't appeal to me. You know what I mean."

"I'm afraid you'll have to tell me," said Tubbs in that grave way he had. "You say he was nice and handsome and rich—even had a new line of talk—what more could a woman ask?"

"He didn't have any thrills in him."

Tubbs looked astonished, but very serious. A monster wave came, and we shot up toward the sky. I let out a scream and he put his arm around me as we came down into a great gully in the sea.

"You aren't afraid, after dropping out of the sky, are you?" he asked with that quizzical smile of his.

I was, I admitted. He took his arm from around me, but kept it on the back of my seat, and I wished he had left it where it was. I felt safer when it was there.

For a while we went over the waves in silence, and every time one of those monsters came, Tubbs held me, then let go, in spite of the fact that I wouldn't have fallen out, as I was strapped in.

Folks don't talk much in times of great stress, I've found. I admired Toodles more than ever. He sat in the front seat, solemn as an owl, watching the waves that caught us up, and bracing himself against those sickening dips into the sea. Now and then he would look back to find out, I suppose, whether we were still in the boat. That was all.

It was sort of wonderful to be out there alone—us two, and a dog—with not a sign of human habitation around us, just miles and miles of sea that rolled up in great glimmering waves of silver. It was rather awful to go shooting up toward a deep-blue sky all spotted with snow-white clouds; then to drop down, and down, in our curious craft, into a black gulf, and not know whether we would come up again. It's funny how the ocean can kick up so, with the moon shining and not a cloud in the sky. After a bit, I got used to it and wasn't as afraid as I would have been in a storm.

"Do you know, Tubbs," I said after quite a while, "it's too bad you aren't rich and handsome."

"Why?" he asked, at the same time catching me for a big dip.

"Because you're full of thrills."

He didn't answer; but looking up in his face, I saw it go red in the bright moonlight. After some minutes, he said in a kind of husky voice: "Thank you, child; but that isn't the sort of thing you ought to say to a man."

"I wouldn't say it to a man in my own class," I returned, "but it really would be wonderful to be married to a man whose touch thrilled one so."

Tubbs burst into boisterous laughter. I liked his laugh, too, and his blue eyes. I always have liked blue eyes.

"It's good of you to say that, Leona." He spoke with a sudden twist of gravity, and took his arm gently away. Somehow I didn't resent his calling me by my first name. I suppose in the face of death one's sense of values changes.

"If I must marry," I continued, "I'd, of course, prefer to have some one I like. But it seems a shame to spend so much to catch a poor man; and anyhow, Tubbs is such an awful name!"

"So it is," he agreed.

Then we didn't talk any more.

Shakespeare says there's nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so.

If he had ever been out in an aeroplane on high seas, he'd have changed that line. I kept thinking I wasn't sick; but that didn't make it so, and pretty soon, I began to hope we would capsize and drown. Tubbs held my head, and I didn't even think of his rough appearance. Toward midnight we had lost our wings which were no good anyhow; but we were still all in the boat. I felt too weak to move, though; and so I just rested against Tubbs.

"Tubbs, do you think we'll last the night through?" I asked weakly.

"Not if this keeps up," he answered truthfully. I found out that he would not lie even to reassure me.

"You and Toodles may be able to keep afloat till help comes," I said, "but I can't swim. If you get out, will you tell Aunt Lucy?"

"I won't get out unless you do," he replied sharply. I knew he meant it, and I felt better.

"Thank you, Tubbs. I don't know anybody I'd rather take with me if I die, outside of Aunt Lucy."

After a while I was so tired that, in spite of my fear, I fell asleep and dreamed of being in jail; and the ghost of my grandfather was there and he flung my body into the ocean, and took me with him to a great courtroom, where the judge asked me what I had done with my name.

When I waked up, Tubbs was looking down in my face with the strangest expression.

"What is it, Tubbs?" I asked. "Are we about to go down?"

"No," he snapped. "Raise up—my shoulder is paralyzed."

I was furious. "How dare you speak to me like that!" I said haughtily, and fell silent.

He seemed to regret his surliness, and tried to make conversation.

"The wind and tide are against us, now," he remarked, "but we aren't far off the coast of some island. We may

drift in, if we can keep together long enough."

I wouldn't answer. It was the most beautiful night I had ever spent, and the most terrible. We were both dripping wet, but of course, it is never cold around southern Florida. Meanwhile, that H-boat, as Tubbs called the *aéroplane*, kept riding the waves like a cork. The salt spray in my face stung like needles; but Tubbs said it was good for me; and my stomach being entirely empty, I wasn't sick any more. I could hardly hold my body up, nevertheless. I determined, however, not to go to sleep again.

# VI.

There was a sickening bump, and I opened my eyes to a world which was a soft, grayish pink. I was delighted to see Tubbs was still with me.

"You kept your word, Tubbs," I said vaguely, wondering that my voice hadn't changed.

"About what?" he asked.

"About staying with me if we went down. Where is my grandfather?"

"We're on the rocks," Tubbs said matter-of-factly.

I raised up with a jerk. I was furious. We weren't dead at all. And not only had I slept with my head on that brute's shoulder, but he had put his arm around me to make me more comfortable. I forgot my fury the next second, as my eyes took in the horror before me. We weren't even in any danger—all we had to do was to step out on the rocks and walk ashore. Tubbs unstrapped Toodles and he jumped on the long arm of rocks jutting into the sea and trotted away toward the beach. A parallel line of rocks was on the left of us. It was the jetties! We had drifted back to Miami Beach! The sea had given me up—returned me to face the charge of robbery! And my attempted flight would fasten the guilt on me completely!

Tubbs loosened the straps that had kept me from a watery grave, and brought me to face disgrace. I sat paralyzed by more than the physical hardships of the night. After unfastening himself, Tubbs rose, and stepping out, stretched out his hand to me. I tried to rise and couldn't.

"Poor little girl," he said, and leaning over, picked me up and started ashore. In spite of my sore body; in spite of my fear of what was before me, I felt a curious thrilling of his strong arms.

He looked down at my face on his breast.

"I wish this were a desert island we had drifted onto," he said, "just you and Toodles and I."

"I feel the same way, Tubbs," I said, thinking of the blond clerk and the pasty-faced detective. "I can't think of any place I'd rather be at this minute than on a desert island with only you and Toodles and me. I feel as if I could stay there forever."

Tubbs seemed to study my face with a sort of grave wonder. Then he laughed in that curious way he has, without reason, as far as I could see.

"I never knew a girl quite like you," he said.

"Have you known many?"

"A good many." He stumbled over a big boulder but recovered himself.

"Were they nicer than I?" I slipped my arm around his neck. It felt safer that way.

"No," he said. "They were so false—most of them. You never knew from what they said what they were thinking.

"So am I false, Tubbs. Don't walk so fast."

"You only think you are," he laughed, picking his way more carefully. I hoped it would take a long time to reach shore.

"Ah, here we are," he sighed with relief, as he put me on my feet on the beach.

"Tubbs," I said, holding on to him for a minute to steady my wabby legs, "what did you work at mostly, before you became a tramp?"

"Why, miss?" he asked again, using the respectful form of address.

"Because, I've decided to marry you," I replied.

He looked astonished; but all he said was: "Have you?"

"Yes," I answered, "and, of course, you'll have to go back to work."

"When did you decide it?" he inquired, with apparent meekness.

"Just now. Though I thought some about it last night. Let's sit down a minute," I said, "and talk it over. I don't feel equal to walking just yet, anyhow."

We sat down on the sand together, to stretch our cramped muscles.

"If I go back to Johnnytown," I said, "I'll have to turn blackmailer in order to preserve my reputation and

peace of mind. And I don't want to do that; though I could do it if I were not a Stafford. I know all the sins of that town. But being a Stafford, I simply can't go back."

"Just so," he replied. He was hugging his knees and staring out to sea.

"And if I don't go back, I won't have any house to live in, and I can't make a living and pay rent out of what I make. I've definitely decided not to go back to Johnnytown; so I've got to have a husband of some sort to support me. Besides, if I get arrested, I'll need a husband to get me out of jail."

"Is there nothing else you can do?" Tubbs asked hopefully, as it seemed to me.

"I think I could write poetry."

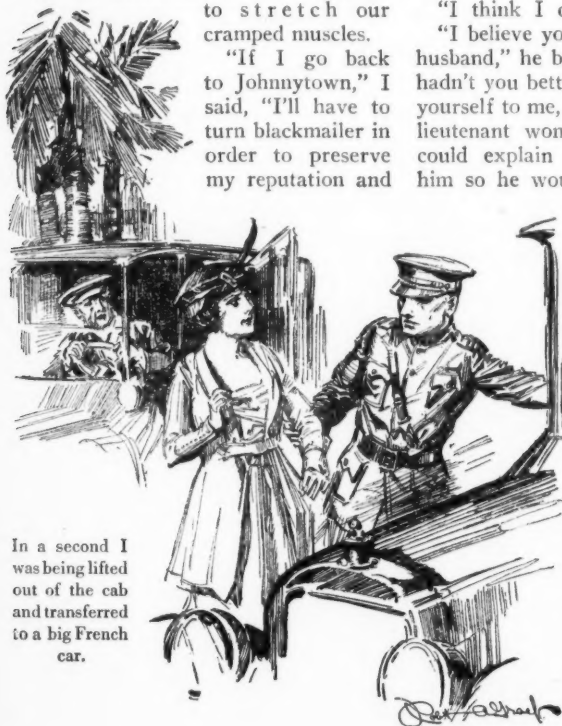
"I believe you'd better decide on the husband," he broke in seriously. "But hadn't you better wait, before engaging yourself to me, and see if the handsome lieutenant won't propose? I think I could explain the whole situation to him so he wouldn't mind. In fact, I suspect he already knows you for a delicious little faker."

"No," I said, "I've decided against him. I couldn't go side-slipping and spinning and barrel-rolling around the world for the rest of my life."

Tubbs began drawing cartoons in the sand.

"Well, how about Billy?" he asked. "He knows all about you. You've nothing to fear from him."

"He's too lively. I don't care for lively men. No, I've decided on you, Tubbs. I have



In a second I was being lifted out of the cab and transferred to a big French car.

quite made up my mind." I was wriggling my limbs about to loosen them up.

"But, it's such a comedown from a millionaire to a tramp mechanic," he protested.

"I don't mind the money," I mused. "I've never had much, anyhow, and maybe I wouldn't know what to do with it. But I do hate your name. It's really awful for a Stafford to marry such a name!"

He agreed that it was.

"But there's something else I've been thinking of," I said. I moved up close beside him. He looked down at me and I noticed his face had flushed a dark red.

"Wouldn't it be nicer to marry a person who made you feel like—like this, than to marry one who had money, or even a name?"

"Would it?" he asked. He stared out to sea again.

"Of course. And you are the only man who ever made me feel thrills, Tubbs."

I was leaning toward him, looking up in his face. "Look at me," I said, "and tell me what you think."

He wouldn't, and I took hold of him. Then he looked; and the next minute he flung both arms around me.

"You little devil!" he stormed, as if angry.

"Oh, Tubbs, don't say that!" I cried. "That's the way all the men in Johnnytown make love."

He released me from his arms at once.

"I beg your pardon." He jumped up and I could see he was wild. "I'm sorry."

"You don't look sorry, Tubbs," I remarked, rising also. "You look mad."

"I am," he snapped. "I'm damned mad! But damn' you, women are all alike! What do you think I am? A wooden man? I can't stand *everything*!"

"Tubbs!" I screamed. "That is such awful old stuff. Every bit of it! Do all men make love in *just* the same way?"

"How many have made love to you, Miss Stafford?" he asked sarcastically.

"Oh, they weren't making it to me," I said. "They bawled me out for listening. Men think a telephone girl always listens."

Tubbs laughed shortly.

"But she doesn't!"

"I did," I said, "because I had nothing else to do; then, I was anxious to see if I mightn't come across some new ways of making love. I always thought the men in Johnnytown were so sickening. But do you know that you have a way of saying the very same words so they sound nice, Tubbs?"

This seemed to hit him. He looked at me for a minute in that curiously grave way of his.

"You are too young and too inexperienced," he said finally, "to realize what you are doing. Miss Stafford, I—you— Let's go. I've got to report the loss of my boat."

His sudden anxiety about the boat, his calling me Miss Stafford, his embarrassed manner, puzzled me; then, all at once, in a soul-searing rush, it came to me that I, Leona Stafford, had proposed to, and been refused, by a *tramp named Tubbs*! A mist came over my sight, like the sudden settling of a heavy fog. I reached out to push it away, and Tubbs laid his hand on my arm—my vision cleared, and a plain band ring such as married men sometimes tag themselves with, penetrated in all its hideous meaning to my consciousness. I had seen it before; but I hadn't thought about it one way or another. Now I understood everything—Tubbs' hesitation to keep his arm around me in the boat, he had merely steadied me over the waves—his snappiness when I had slept on his shoulder.

Married! A tramp! And I—

All the fires of the Staffords flamed in me.

"Let go my arm!" I stormed. "You miserable inefficient! You sponger on life—not even earning the right to live. Deserting the wife you have married, and shirking your responsibilities everywhere! I hate you and all that you stand for!"

His hand dropped as if scorched, and I turned and ran from the shame that was on me.

But trying to run away from one's own shame is like trying to run away from one's arms—no matter how fast you go, when you stop, they are there.

Tubbs did not try to follow me. I looked back and saw him standing where I had left him—a rugged figure etched against sea and sky. Striking the two-mile cement walk that rims the ocean almost all the way from the jetties to Fischer's gaudy beach, I went wretchedly on and on. Toodles ran ahead of me. My hunger and my fatigue had left me. There is a misery of mind so great that it deadens all sense of the physical. After about a mile, however, my legs gave way under me, and I sat down by the side of the walk. The quiet of early morning was all about me. There was no human sound anywhere—only the rattle of the wind-blown palms that fringed the beach, and the sighing of the restless sea as it lashed the shore and came almost up to the walk, then ran furiously back again. Toodles came and sat down beside me for a second, then presently he got interested in a turtle down on the beach.

What was this wretchedness that made my heart feel like a heavy load too big for me to carry, filling my chest, making it hard for me to breathe, and even reaching up into my throat in a lump which hurt fearfully? Oh, yes—I would be arrested for stealing, and go to jail; then I would have to admit that I was a wretched fraud, and they would

have to verify my story before they could let me go, and it would all come out—the story of my poor little adventure. I would be laughed at, and grow yellow and wrinkled like the old maids at home. I would have to sit, year in and year out, at that switchboard, and listen to—— Oh! it nauseated me.

Against my will, came the memory of how Tubbs had used those same old phrases and made them delicious. This increased my misery. I sat there watching a monster sun rise in drowsy sadness out of the tropic sea, turning it to boiling gold, and had it all out with myself. I saw myself as I was!

I don't believe I had ever thought before. I had been born and had grown up, had accidentally fallen into a job, and read novels and eavesdropped over the phone; then I had come into a little money, and had deliberately gone husband hunting without having given a single thought to marriage. I had simply taken it for granted that women fit for nothing else had to get married. I knew boys, married during the war, who were not thinking of married life any more than I was; but they had wanted to leave wives who would write to them, and miss them, and wish for them to come home. So, if perhaps some man should be inclined to condemn a girl who goes into marriage thoughtlessly, what about the men?

When I did get to thinking, I found I had something to think with. And sitting alone with the sunrise and the sea, many things came to me.

I had come for a husband—any husband with money. Why had I refused Billy? Why had I decided against the lieutenant, too, and yet proposed to Tubbs myself? Surely he must be my mate—if so, was I not his also? Had he married another as inconsequentially as Billy had wanted to marry me, and as I, indeed, had thought to marry a rich husband?



Ethel's father says nobody can think until he has had experience; before that, he just sees and hears and remembers, and believes he's thinking. I had instinctively refused what I supposed I was looking for—a rich husband. I was glad of this. Also instinctively, I had found my mate—first, in rough clothes, in a telephone booth, with rage toward me in his heart; then, barefooted and unshaven on the sands. Against all reason, I, a Stafford, had chosen a "Tubbs" who loafed and wore rough clothes, when he might have been doing other things, as I knew.

Well, what of it? There was nothing to be done.

I got up and walked down to where the waves dashed up over my feet. My clothes were almost dry. In Florida, the wind sweeps along the shore but carries no chill. It came to me that I needn't go back to the hotel to be arrested, nor to Johnnytown to be an object of ridicule all my life. I could just walk out in the water—too far—With a feeling of self disgust I turned back to the walk. I was a Stafford! And I could face whatever came. It shamed me to recollect that I had tried to run away yesterday, and I now thanked the sea for bringing me back.

I met the first bus from Miami at Collin's bridge, and started with Toodles on the last leg of my journey to the hotel—and whatever horrors it held. The bus was full of laughing, chattering children, on their way to school. I drew back into a corner. Their gayety jarred on me. I was going back to face the result of my own foolishness; but I was not brave. On the contrary, I was sick with fear and dread. I took off my hat and put my head out of the bus window, and let the air from the bay blow through my hair.

Miami, just waking to business, seemed threatening and unfriendly. Strangers looked at me, and I thought

they knew me and believed me a thief. I wondered if my picture had been put in the papers. I could see the headlines: "*Girl mysteriously disappears from hotel after jewel robbery,*" etc, etc.

As I alighted from the bus, my heart gave a sickening leap—then stopped, I felt sure. Crossing the park, coming toward me, was the pasty-faced man. I wanted to run; but somehow I forced myself to meet him. He turned off toward the ferry without seeing me. I felt as I'm sure a murderer feels, when the hounds lose him for a minute.

On the hotel steps I had another sinking spell when two women I knew came up and quizzed me searchingly about where I'd been, and seemed very curious about my appearance, when I replied airily that I'd just been spending the night with a friend.

As I entered the lobby the blond clerk darted away, perhaps for the detective. Hesitating, not knowing what I ought to do, I saw the handsome lieutenant. I watched his expression for the disgust that I knew would be there when he recognized me. Instead, he was delighted.

"Why, Madame Marinoff!" he cried. "Where have you been? And why did you hop away so unceremoniously? You look like a bullet-riddled biplane."

"Have they been looking for me!" I asked, ignoring his remarks.

He was clearly surprised at my perfectly good English, but being a gentleman, made no comment.

"No, why should they?" he replied. "Your maid said you had gone away on a little trip, and she checked out and left the hotel. I tried to get your address from her, but couldn't."

"What about Mrs. Dale's hundred-thousand-dollar necklace?" I asked. "Did they catch the thief?"

The lieutenant laughed. "There wasn't any thief. Mrs. Dale has a habit

of losing that necklace on an average of twice a year, I understand."

I understood, too. This was her way of keeping her wealth and position, which were her only claim to attention, from being forgotten or overlooked. I felt as if I'd been corked up in a bottle, gasping for air, and somebody had pulled the cork, and I had popped out like champagne.

"There was considerable whispering about the hotel over it," he went on. "But that's as far as it went. She found it, as usual."

"Well, tell me," I said. "Why did you chase me in a boat?"

He looked surprised, then he smiled. "Were you in one of those boats?" he asked. "I was taking a walk on the beach——"

"With the blond clerk?" I broke in.

"No, with a Swedish chap. I was hoping I'd run across you, but I didn't. After quite some time, we noticed two boats, both racers, out on the water. They started a race; then a plane fell and broke it up. One boat went and helped the man in the plane and the other got out of the way."

"I was in the front boat," I said. "Are you sure that other boat was only racing us?"

"Sure."

"But what for?"

"Just for fun."

"How do you know?"

"I was down at the water when Demson came in. He said he'd have caught your boat if it hadn't been for the sea-plane getting in the way."

"Where is the blond clerk?" I asked casually.

"Probably darting about the corridors," laughed the lieutenant. "He has ambitions to be a detective. He's related to the management, so they put up with him."

It was true—my disappearance had created no stir. People come and go as they will in Miami. Nobody but

the blond clerk had even suspected me of anything, and I couldn't blame him much. The name I used and those cards and telegrams from Ethel were enough to make anybody suspicious, let alone an embryo detective. But he had kept his own counsel, and I was so relieved that I'd have forgiven anybody anything.

Suddenly I found I was outrageously hungry; so, bedraggled as I was, I had breakfast. As Aunt Lucy had taken all my clothes I had to go to a shop immediately afterward, where I bought a complete outfit with what remained of my money. I certainly did enjoy putting on a pretty light frock once more. I had already phoned Billy at the Naval Air and asked him to come in and lend me money with which to go home.

I was sitting out on the big veranda that afternoon, waiting for him, when the pasty-faced man came out and sat down beside me.

I searched my mind for something which one might conceivably say to a detective, when he solved the problem—by proposing.

"I never saw a girl like you," he said, "and I've made up my mind to have you. You pretended to be a foreigner. I see now it was a pose; but I don't care what you are—I mean to marry you."

"I suppose detectives can do that," I remarked.

"Do what?"

"Marry whomever they like."

"You think I am a detective?" he asked, with a blank look.

"The way you tagged me, I thought you were," I said.

"I am a munitions manufacturer," he replied haughtily, at the same time passing over his card and producing other credentials for me. "And I 'tagged' you, as you call it, because I admired you; and the more you ran from me the more I determined to have

you. I was greatly upset when you left so suddenly. But now you are back——"

"Yes, now that I'm back it looks simple," I said. "But I'm afraid you'll have to change your mind, for you are not going to marry me."

He looked incredulous.

"Why not?" he demanded. "You know I want you!"

"That may be," I said, "but I don't want you!"

"You don't!" It seemed as if he couldn't credit the idea. He looked indignant for a brief space; then he smiled as if he understood.

"You will think it over." He spoke patronizingly, as if to a spoiled child.

"I don't need to," I said curtly. "I'm quite sure I don't fancy the idea of being married to you."

"Will you tell me why not, ridiculous child?" he asked, still convinced that I was playing with him.

"I don't like your complexion," I replied truthfully.

He was quite upset by this idea; but I suppose men who make millions are not easily put down. Anyway, it was difficult to convince him that I really meant to turn him and his munitions down; when I did succeed, he went away in a dudgeon.

Pretty soon Billy came along, and he gave me another chance to make him my husband; but I referred him to Ethel, and he asked me to help him compose a letter to her. I told him he couldn't go wrong, because she had already decided to marry him, so he wired a hundred words. I went with him to the telegraph office. Then I borrowed enough money from him to get home. He had a date with a girl from Palm Beach, so he stayed with me only till three o'clock. I was leaving at four.

Toodles tagged me forlornly, as though he held me responsible for murdering Tubbs, or something. I always

get blamed for things, somehow. I had come to like that idiotic dog so much that I felt I couldn't give him back to Ethel. I wouldn't feel "all there" without him.

Well, nothing would have surprised me after all I'd been through, so when Lieutenant Sarno hunted me up, after Billy had left, I was quite prepared for another proposal. It certainly is true that it pays to advertise.

It's curious, too, how a person can change. A month before I'd have been out of my head over three proposals in one evening.

The lieutenant opened his proposal by telling me all about himself. He enjoyed that part of it. I told him all about myself. He was not shocked; but seemed to think I had pulled off quite a stunt. That made me feel better. He was so frank and good looking that I couldn't help liking him.

After I had told him exactly how I felt toward him, he told me something quite shocking about himself. When a girl picks a husband by the price of the hotel he stops at, she is apt to get a surprise. Lieutenant Sarno had no money. He thought I had. I "sicked" him onto Mrs. Dale, and lost no time checking out of the hotel.

On my way to the train, the taxi came to a sudden stop.

"Snap out of your hop, you little goose," came a sharp voice, and in a second, I was being lifted out of the cab and transferred to a big French car. Tubbs jumped in beside me, and the car started with a jerk. He was all dressed up in a stunning olive-drab uniform. In spite of my surprise, I remember, I thought that clothes certainly do make a man, as well as a woman. His figure looked wonderful. He took off his cap, and his sandy hair curled beautifully back over his adorable head. His blue eyes were flashing. By merely changing his suit, the Tramp had become a King.

"What do you mean?" I cried, when I had recovered my breath. "You'll make me miss my train!"

"That's what I intend to do," Tubbs snapped. "You are going home on your own yacht!"

"I have no——"

"Oh, yes, you have," he said, "because I'm giving it to you for a wedding present."

"A wedding——"

"Yes, I'm going to marry you this afternoon. I have the license, and the minister is waiting. He is a lieutenant out at Curtiss Field—just a young chap, friend of mind from home, has his wife here and——"

"I'll die before I'll marry you, you big brute!" I cried.

"I'd have seen you before, to let you know about the wedding," he went on undisturbed, "but I've been so busy getting things fixed up. A lot of red tape about the loss of that H-boat. Fortunately for me, they didn't find out about my taking you up. Quite a stunt that!"

"Stop this car," I commanded.

"Then I had to get the yacht in readiness for its new mistress. You saw the big one out in the Gulf Stream—owner's flag, red with yellow star?"

"If you think you are going to marry me in any such fashion as this," I stormed, as we crossed the bridge on Avenue D, "you are very much mistaken!"

"I met your friend Billy," remarked Tubbs, "coming from the hotel, after he'd seen you——"

"Did you hear what I said?" I was wild with anger.

"And he told me you'd turned him down, so I offered sympathetically to let him be best man at your wedding. He informed me that you were going home on the four o'clock, so I rushed frantically to the hotel and they said you'd just left."

The car stopped in front of the dear-

est little vine-covered cottage with coconut and royal palms in front and scarlet verbenas running riot over the lawn.

"Here we are," said Tubbs, jumping out. "Don't make a scene, dear, and get us into the papers. I hate notoriety."

He held out his hand to me. I refused it, and he lifted me out forcibly. Just then Billy came running up. He was the most excited boy you ever saw.

"No wonder you wouldn't have me! Only big game for you!" He grabbed my hand and almost shook my arm off.

Then he and Tubbs began rushing me into the little cottage where the minister and his wife lived. She met us at the door, and kissed me with tears, and hoped I'd be happy, though she was just a young thing, and couldn't have found marriage very tragic so soon.

Tubbs didn't let me stop to answer, but rushed me into the pretty living room.

"I won't," I whispered fiercely, though I admit it was thrilling to be married like this.

"A Stafford can't make a scene," Tubbs whispered back, at the same time pulling me along.

A young aviator man who, in spite of being a minister, liked a bit of fun, met us in the center of the room with twinkling eyes, which indicated that Tubbs had explained the situation to him. He picked up one of my unwilling hands and shook it cordially, then shook Tubbs' hand, and at once began to read to us out of a little book he held open.

Everything got hazy and unreal. I heard the minister's voice droning along. It's a fearful thing to be married without advance notice.

Then, as if shouted, came the words:

"Do you, Russell Cromwell——"

"What's that?" I cried out.

"Take this woman——" the minister went on.

"Russell Cromwell!" I gasped, trying to pull myself away in my astonishment.

"I do," said Tubbs, holding onto me.

"Do you, Leona Stafford——"

"The man I kidnaped!"

"Sh-h-h! who kidnaped you," whispered Tubbs.

"Take this man——" continued the minister with a tremor in his voice.

"I should say I——"

"The newspapers!" hissed Tubbs.

"Do!" I finished.

Tubbs put the plain band ring he wore on my finger, and closed my hand to keep it from slipping off. "My mother's," he whispered.

"I pronounce you man and wife," said the minister. It was over, and they were all laughing and shaking hands, and Tubbs was kissing me.

"I was married against my will," I said furiously to the jolly young minister who seemed not a bit disturbed by my anger.

"Be thankful that he didn't stun you with the jawbone of an ox," he replied,

with mock gravity. "That's the way we used to win our mates."

"But nowadays our mates come hunting us," put in Tubbs—I mean Russell—pretending to be in great distress. "She inveigles us into giving her a hop in an aeroplane, which means disgrace, if we are found out, and when we are hopelessly compromised, she proposes. Then, to avoid blackmail and at the same time to save our faces, we make a bluff at carrying her off."

"The world has changed," sighed the minister in seeming distress.

You see, Tubbs wasn't Tubbs at all, nor a tramp; but Captain Russell Cromwell, who had several German planes to his credit, and who, being honorably discharged, had promptly sneaked away from his friends who were killing him with entertaining, when all he wanted was rest. He had notified the papers to stop the publicity, but keep still about his hiding place.

Ethel insists that having a tramp fall in love with one, and having him turn out a millionaire hero, is fool's luck.

She gave us that German dog for a wedding present.



### HEART SONG

I WEAR no heart upon my sleeve;  
It seems, somehow, a silly place.  
But when you come, or when you leave,  
I wear it shining on my face.

When you are gone, no one can find  
The paths it wanders, out of view—  
Disconsolate and lonely blind,  
Or blossoming at thought of you.

You come again: my heart will shine  
Again, and vanish from my face,  
Seeking a choicer home than mine,  
Burrowing deep in your heart's place.

CLEMENT WOOD.

# On Getting Rid of an Admirer

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Love at Forty," "How Many Can One Love at Once?" etc.

What a long, long time since the poet wrote  
of love that it was woman's whole existence!

FOR generations a great deal has been written upon what may be called the technique of feminine capture. Woman has been instructed by countless writers upon the art of winning a husband, and upon the no less important and difficult art of keeping him after she has won him. Wise women, conductresses of correspondence columns, have sat, wearing the sibylline veil of anonymity, and have told their anxious inquirers how to attract the admiring attention of the high-school boy who passes the house every morning, of the young gentleman who works in the same office, of the brother of a friend, of the young man met at the party at an aunt's house, of the boy in the butcher shop and the clerk in the law court.

Perhaps the thousands of words written on the subject have proved helpful to the seekers after knowledge. Perhaps all the girls who want to know how "to win him" have learned the way. For, at last another query arises. A girl actually wants to know how to get rid of an admirer. She writes about the situation with a fair degree of intelligence, self-understanding, and humor. This is what she says:

"Of course I thought that I wanted to be admired by men. Every girl is brought up to think that, to think that she is a failure if she isn't admired by them. I learned my feminine lesson. It would have been considered immoral in my home circle for me to say outright that I wanted to be married or to go to work to hunt a husband.

Husbands were supposed to drop like manna from heaven. But a certain amount of admiration, a certain amount of 'attention,' were held to belong by natural right to every girl.

"Well, I confess that I never had much of it. I was as good-looking as lots of the girls about whom boys buzzed like flies about a jam pot, and goodness knows I was as intelligent as most other girls. But I didn't get on with boys. To tell you the truth, they generally bored me. It sounds like sour grapes, but I don't think it was a case of that well-known bitter fruit. The kind of boys that hang around girls aren't really very brilliant, you know, and they truly didn't interest me. I suppose I used to be a bit too candid in showing the fact. So they very largely let me alone. Nobody was waiting around after school to 'beau' me home, or hanging around after prayer meeting with the same kind intention. I didn't have partners at our little dances. I generally helped the hostess' mother with the lemonade bowl or the sandwiches, in order to seem to have a reason for being on hand at all.

"Now, although the boys didn't really interest me, I hated dreadfully not to be admired, not to have attention and suitors and pseudosuitors and all the rest of it. And so when at last there came along a young man who seemed attracted by me, I didn't have the nerve not to encourage him, although he didn't interest me any more than the rest of the boys. By that time I was twenty-two, and in our town a girl is pretty



near the shelf at twenty-two. I simply couldn't stand the thought of being laid up there without having ever experienced the pleasure of conquest, the pleasure which all the other girls I knew seemed to value beyond everything else in their lives.

"Well, I encouraged the uninteresting young man—he is an uninteresting young man! I encouraged him unduly, I suspect. I was so determined that they—my friends and cousins and all the family connection—shouldn't any longer be able to say: 'Poor Sarah! It's queer that men don't like her. She's really a very nice girl'—so determined that they shouldn't be able to go on saying that, that I went to greater lengths in encouraging my admirer than I think advisable. When he wanted to hold my hand, I let him hold it—afraid that he would go off in a huff if I didn't and that I couldn't flaunt him the next Wednesday evening at prayer meeting. When he wanted to put his arm around me, I squirmed, but subdued my squirms by the same course of reasoning.

"By and by he kissed me, and then I was through! Or I thought I was through. I find that I reckoned without my admirer. He isn't through. He has never gone through with the form of proposing to me, but I think it is his intention, his expectation, to marry me. And I am simply ashamed to tell him that I didn't mean a single thing by the whole performance except to have my rights as a girl before I was shelved as an old maid—a type that still exists in our community, although I understand that it has gone out in more cosmopolitan places.

"How am I going to get rid of the man—without hurting his feelings too severely? I don't want to hurt him. I don't want to hurt any one. I simply can't bear to. And I realize that I have only myself to thank for the situation in which I find myself. I en-

couraged him for my own vain purposes. I used him—and I haven't got the courage to discard him now that he has served them. He has served them only too well. Most of my relatives believe that we are engaged, and that I am merely sly in not announcing it, and all of the girls and boys I travel with take it for granted that I am a 'regular fellow' of a girl now, and I don't have to help with the lemonade and cake any longer to seem to belong at a party.

"I have tried to get rid of him in indirect ways. I put into practice the exact opposite of all the rules I ever read for attracting men. For instance, there is that rule about letting them talk of what interests them, while you—the girl—listen with eager interest. I simply transposed that. I talked steadily all one long and terrible evening on the subject of bead bags, their cost, their beauty, their manufacture. It was a horrible failure. He said, when he was leaving that evening: 'Do you know, Sarah, I don't think I have ever seen you in such animated spirits and so—so girlish? I didn't realize that you were interested in frivolous things like bead bags. But you are. You are just a regular girl, after all, aren't you?' And he looked at me with calf eyes—and the next day he sent me a perfectly gorgeous bead bag! And when I tried to explain to him that I couldn't take such gifts from him, I nearly precipitated the dreaded proposal in form, and he looked so hurt that I simply had to keep the silly thing.

"Then I remembered the old axiom about making your views mere echoes of theirs—of the men whom you would attract, I mean. Well, the opposite policy ought to work for repulsion, ought it not? I knew that he—my he—hated the suffrage movement, and that every fresh State won to the cause made him almost weep for the de-

cline of all the old virtues. So I went to suffrage headquarters in our county seat the last time I was there, and I enrolled and asked what work I could do to further the spread of the suffrage gospel. They told me a lot of things, and I came back home loaded down with pamphlets and posters. I spread them all around the parlor the next evening that he was coming, and waited for the storm to break.

"Well, he looked at them, and he listened to me while I declaimed on the subject of women's wrongs and woman's rights. And do you know what actually happened? He said: 'If a woman like you feels this way, Sarah, I am in favor of giving her the vote. I never realized before that a quiet, home-loving woman cared for political life and thought about political problems before. But you are even more wonderful than I always knew you were. I'll take a couple of posters to stick up in the office!' Now, I ask you, could anything in the world be more discouraging than that?"

"I have smoked a cigarette, though it nearly killed me, in order to disgust him with me. Did it work? It did not! He only laughed and said that he had never been able to see any reason why women shouldn't smoke if they wanted to, and that he would send away for some special cigarettes for me.

"And finally I semiconfided in a cousin of mine, a regular little imp and 'vamp'—that is what she calls herself—and begged her to exert her well-known charms upon him. She's as pretty as a picture, and jolly and joky and not afraid of a little thing like a few kisses. She went to the task as confidently as I would go to the demonstration of a problem in algebra. And he told me, after she had expended a week of skillful, highly brilliant effort

on him, that he hoped I wouldn't have much to do with Vivian in future, as he did not think her a desirable companion for a woman like me. And I stood up for her, impassionately, and tried to quarrel with him on the ground that he was a mollycoddle and that he talked against women after luring them on to showing him little kindnesses.

"Quarrel? I might as well have tried to quarrel with my nice collie dog. He listened to me for a while and then he told me that he could never express how deeply he revered me for my defense of one of my own sex; if there were more women like me, the world would be a happier place; and that probably I was right. He had spoken thoughtlessly, wrongly. Vivian was, probably, as I said, merely young, high-spirited, and gay. He felt himself a cad to have said what he had said!

"That was my very last card—trying to involve him with another and more fascinating type of person. It was a high one, but he trumped it. What am I going to do? How is it possible to get rid of an admirer without hurting his feelings?"

It is a new problem in emotional relations, and the seeresses who write behind the veil in the evening papers had better divert some of their thought from the question of how to attract men to the problem of how to repel them without the use of shrapnel fire. Times have changed. Women have jobs. This earnest inquirer about correctives for masculine admiration seems to be a teacher of mathematics. Women who have jobs and thus are not dependent upon men for a livelihood—how remote to them seems the interest in the question of how to attract admiration! What a long, long time since the poet wrote of love that it was woman's whole existence!



# Miss Orleneff Finds Happiness

By Elizabeth Jordan

Author of "The Girl in the Mirror," "John Hartley's Step Aside," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD C. CASWELL

An unusual young woman was Alla. No wonder the story has an unexpected ending!

ANNE VAN DORN read the letter with raised eyebrows. It ran:

MY DEAR MISS VAN DORN: Last Tuesday night, at our Girls' Club, you talked to us about work. I liked what you said. It helped me in my work, which is bookkeeping. But I wished you had talked about other things, too. That might have helped us even more.

For there are other things in life than work. There is happiness. Why did you not talk to us about that? Why did you not tell us how to be happy? Surely happiness is important to all.

I ask because I myself am a disconsolate person. Though I am only twenty years old, I am tired of life. This is not strange, for I have never had one happy day since I was born. It is not that I work too hard. My Saturday half holidays are sadder than my other days.

There must be some way to secure happiness. What is it? Where does happiness lie?

Please tell me. For you are a woman of the world, and you should know.

ALLA ORLENEFF.

"Another nut to crack?" asked a cheerful voice behind the reader.

Anne wheeled in her swivel desk chair. "Good heavens, Bob!" she exclaimed irritably. "I wish you wouldn't come padding in here with that noiseless jungle tread of yours, and let off your voice like a megaphone in my ears when I think I'm alone. Besides," she added aloofly, "I'm busy."

Robert Van Dorn drew an easy chair close to her desk and dropped into it with a smile of content.

"So am I," he asserted.

"If you're bored and looking for a new interest—in other words, if you are in your usual condition—read this letter," she suggested.

Her brother's lips puckered in a noiseless whistle. He took the letter, read it carefully, and then devoted a close study to the paper and penmanship.

"Think it's genuine?" he asked.

"I'm not sure," his sister admitted. "It's either genuine or an unusually clever fake. It sounds exactly like some of the Russian girls we have in the club. They think, those girls."

Bob was studying the writer's address.

"Upper East Side," he muttered; "way over near the river. That sounds like the real thing."

"One of the model tenements," Anne corroborated. "Alla Orleneff probably lives there in a grimy four-room flat with a sick father and mother and four or five little brothers and sisters, all of whom she is supporting and educating on fifteen or eighteen dollars a week. They're simply wonderful, those Russian girls. I have an immense admiration for them. I'll write to her."

She looked yearningly at her idle pen and at the pile of unopened letters still before her. She adored her brother, but she also loved her work—her self-imposed task of acting as counselor and "big sister" to hundreds of ambitious working girls. She wished

Bob would go away now and leave her in peace. But, after all, Bob had been home only a week from his latest South African hunting trip, and he might fly off again at any moment.

She sighed. "I'll write to her," she repeated.

Her brother's eyes were still on the letter that topped the waiting pile.

"I don't think a note is the whole solution here, Anne," he said slowly. "I rather think you'll have to go at this case in another way."

Anne stared at him. She was flattered by his unusual interest, and also slightly amused by his assumption of superior judgment. She made, for her, a large concession.

"Perhaps I will go and see her."

"That's a good idea. But why not do the thing up brown? The girl says she has never had a happy day since she was born. Why not give her one? I'll help."

Anne looked at him.

"Dear altruist, how frightfully bored you must be!"

He flushed, then laughed.

"Well, if it comes to that," he admitted, "I *am* bored!"

"So he wants a nice new game," continued his sister. "He wants to take a poor working girl out for a lark, and show her where happiness lies."

Bob rose. "Oh, well, if you're going to take it like that——"

"Come back here," said Anne. "Of course I'm game for any experiment you want to make that won't hurt the girl," she added good-humoredly. "What do you suggest?"

"One happy day," repeated Bob firmly. "Do all the things a young girl likes—take her to lunch, *matinée*, dinner, theater, supper."

"Why not write her your definition of happiness," suggested Anne wickedly. "It could be put into two words, food and pleasure."

●Bob shrugged his shoulders.

"You might value them more," he reminded her, "if you spent months at a time in places where you couldn't get either." Then he returned to the wheedling manner of his small boyhood. "Come on," he urged. "Let's give Alla Orleneff, whoever she may be, the happiest day of her life! Let's do it next Saturday!"

"Or at least, the most strenuous," his sister amended. "Of course we'll do it, if you like. But I don't think," she added oratorically, "that we shall find happiness in restaurants or——"

"More variety might be better," he agreed. "Say lunch and the *matinée* in town, and a run out to Highcliff Farm in the motor for dinner and the week-end dance. We'd have to go to the dance anyway, you know. But probably it would be better to invite her to spend the afternoon, and trust to inspiration for the details."

Anne agreed. She understood her brother very well, much better than he imagined. She knew his faults and his virtues, his selfishness and his generosity. He was already bored, as he usually was at home, and eager for a new experience. This Russian girl interested him solely because she was draped in the veil of the unknown. If, on meeting her, his interest continued, he would arrange and carry out an attractive program. If it did not, he would pay all the expenses of the day, but would leave his sister and her guest to their own resources without compunction, and on some suddenly found pretext. Anne knew better than to make any promises for him in the brief but friendly invitation she obediently wrote and mailed to her correspondent.

She ended:

I can't guarantee happiness; only a good time, and possibly some new experiences. Unless you telephone to the contrary, I will call for you at one o'clock on Saturday. I hope you can give me all afternoon and the night, as well. We may decide to go into the



"You are Alla?" she smiled,  
as they shook hands.

country; and as the next day is Sunday, I assume that you will be free. My brother has an annual dance at his farm when he is in this country, and I usually go. You may enjoy that. Or we may stay in town and go to the theater Saturday night. Tell your family not to expect you home till Sunday afternoon. Of course, they know that you will be quite safe in my care.

She frowned a little as she dropped the letter into the mail chute of the big apartment house in which she and Bob lived. To be the only sister of a mighty hunter had some inconvenient phases.

She was still experiencing a slight doubt of the letter's genuineness when she presented herself at the Orleneff door at noon on the following Saturday. It increased when the door opened and she was led along the dark little hall, by a guide she could hardly see. It vanished when she was suddenly ushered into a small but immaculate living room, full of sunshine and potted plants.

She had pictured a gloomy environment for the girl who had never been

happy, but the Orleneff home was very far from gloomy. In a big chair by the window, beside the potted plants, a middle-aged, dark-skinned Russian woman was placidly knitting a gray sock. At a small table near her, a girl of seventeen bent nearsightedly over a book; and now, directly in front of the visitor, stood the girl who had admitted her, and whose dark face and vivid eyes she remembered having seen at the club. A sense of relief swept over Anne.

"You are Alla?" she smiled, as they shook hands.

The girl replied unsmilingly. "Yes. And this is my mother and my young sister, Sonya."

Miss Van Dorn greeted the two, and took the chair offered her. She was taking in impressions with a rapidity that was slightly confusing, and her strongest impression was surprise.

Here was no bleak Russian atmosphere. Here was an unmistakable home, presided over by a mother whose plain face expressed an abiding peace of mind. A pleasant fire burned in the small fireplace. In a cage above the potted plants an undaunted canary greeted the guest with a jubilant outburst of song. The white teeth of the younger sister flashed at the visitor in a shy smile. Here, in three hearts, at least, contentment dwelt. Anne looked at the face of Alla Orleneff and tried to read the secret of the fourth.

It was an unusual face and a haunting one, the face of a brooding madonna, thoughtful, inscrutable, and deeply serious. A jet-black wing of hair lay low on the left brow. A jet-black wing waved upward on the right. Black eyes of a soft brilliancy rested on Anne for an instant, enveloped her, and then turned coolly from her. One thing was immediately clear. Miss Orleneff was not overwhelmed, as perhaps she should have been, by the honor of the invitation and this visit.

"An unusual type," Anne reflected uneasily. Aloud, she expressed the courtesies of the occasion. She hoped Alla's mother and sister would not miss her too much. But no, the mother assured her with gentle dignity. They were very glad that Alla would have some pleasure. She had too little pleasure for a young girl. It was kind of Miss Van Dorn to think of her.

Anne experienced an odd sense of being put at her ease by this Russian peasant, who permitted no chance winds to ruffle the quiet waters of her life. In just such manner, she felt, would Madame Orleneff have welcomed the neighbor across the hall or an ex-grand duke from her own stricken land. Looking at the silent knitter in the big chair, Anne realized whence had come Alla's suggestion of reserve strength.

Alla herself had disappeared into an inner room to get her coat and hat. She now returned wearing them, and carrying a small hand bag. Anne regarded her with approval. They were simple but becoming little garments, and this Russian girl wore them with an air. She would blend pleasantly with the Ritz or Plaza background which Bob had suggested.

"I had to ask my brother to join us," she explained. "He is home for a short visit, so I could hardly desert him."

Alla raised her strange eyes.

"I have read his books," she observed remotely.

Anne smiled. "Tell him that."

"Why should I tell him?"

"Why, merely to start the acquaintance auspiciously," Anne jested. "All authors like to be appreciated."

Her guest reflected. "I see," she murmured slowly. "But I do not like your brother's books. This killing just to kill, I do not like that. So perhaps it is better that we should not speak of the books, is it not?"

Miss Van Dorn experienced a slight



shock. She was not accustomed to hearing that her friends did not like her brother's books. She began to feel that the day held possibilities of strain.

"Much better," she agreed hurriedly. "You will like him, I think, so it doesn't matter about the books."

"Why shall I like him?"

"Every one does," observed Bob's sister briefly. She sought to divert her guest's attention by addressing the chauffeur.

"The Ritz-Carlton, Martin," she directed. She turned to Alla. "We will lunch there," she explained, "and go to a *matinée* afterward. That was Bob's idea."

There was a moment of silence before her companion spoke again. Then, "Did you show my letter to your brother?" she asked.

"Why, yes," Anne admitted uncomfortably. "He happened to come into my study while I was reading it. We talked it over and made this plan."

"I see." Again the eyes of her guest met hers, and Anne was conscious of a disturbing discovery. There was a strange expression in those eyes, an expression that was almost—could it be?—ironic amusement. Subconsciously, Anne knew what her guest was thinking.

"Does this woman imagine that happiness lies in a restaurant lunch and a play? Is this the best they can do, these two wise ones who have talked it over?"

Miss Van Dorn, notwithstanding her occasional poses and her chronic egotism, was no fool. The color rose to her face. She would endure much from her protégées, but she had made one unwritten law: they should not laugh at her.

"Are you happy, Miss Van Dorn?"

The girl beside her had asked the question so abruptly that Anne was startled into unconsidered frankness.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Why, for many reasons. One, the big one, I suppose, is that I am not making the success of my work that I could wish."

"Shall I tell you why?"

"If you can."

"I can." There was no reflection of Anne's smile on the somber face beside her. "It is because you do not know the lives of the girls you try to help. How, then, can you help them?"

"But they talk to me—they tell me things——"

"Pouf!" There was no rudeness in the little word. It merely blew away the meaningless confidences. "They talk as they feel for the moment. The next moment, to the next person, they talk differently." She leaned toward Miss Van Dorn. "Live among them," she added. "Not in a settlement house. Go and board with some of them, if it is only for a month." Suddenly she laughed. "But social workers do not like that. They stay on the bank, and watch the girls drown, and tell them they should learn to swim."

Anne felt her face burn, yet she could not really resent the words. They were too true, and she herself was too honest.

"Perhaps you are right," she said, with unusual humility. "I will remember what you have said."

Bob came to meet his sister and her guest as they entered the Ritz dining room, and led them to the table he had reserved. One glance at his eyes when the three had taken their places told Anne the day was to be a success. Bob was interested. Now, Anne reflected gratefully, unless the girl made one of her appallingly frank remarks, all would be well. But, for a time, Alla made no remarks at all. Bob did the talking, and as the luncheon progressed, a slow change occurred in Miss Orleneff's expression. Her face took on a look of watchful waiting.

Though she spoke very little, what she said was uttered with dignity and quiet assurance. There was nothing *gauche* about this girl of the model temperament. Nevertheless, before they left the table, she succeeded in giving Bob what he subsequently described as a "jolt."

"I do not like men," she said quietly, in response to some casual remark he had made.

Bob dropped his fork, and turned to her with lively interest.

discovered there. "Nevertheless, I do not like men. Why? Because my experience with them has not been agreeable."

Anne and her brother exchanged glances. Then Bob laughed.



"I do not like men," she said quietly. Bob dropped his fork, and turned to her with lively interest.

"You don't?" he exclaimed. "Why don't you?"

He was staring at her in such obvious, wide-eyed surprise that, for the first time, the girl's lips twitched. She almost smiled.

"You are not used to that?" she suggested; and again in her eyes was the odd glint Miss Van Dorn had already

"No doubt you are right," he agreed. "I think, myself, that men represent about the lowest form of animal life. I believe the author shows them up in the *matinée* we are to see to-day," he ended, "so you will like that!"

Apparently, Miss Orleneff did not

like the play, though she took it, as she took everything else, in her characteristic unsmiling calm.

"Does it interest you?" Bob asked, during one of the intermissions. He



was trying to meet her eyes, but she had a disconcerting habit of looking past the side of a fellow's face, always with that guarded expression that was beginning to puzzle him. Suddenly he began to understand. She was afraid of him. He recalled her words. Her experience with men had not been agreeable.

"Does it interest you?" he repeated. "Very much."

He had to be content with that. She was taking in impressions. He knew that nothing in the crowded house, no slightest detail of the performance, missed those intent, deep eyes.

During tea, in the crowded Plaza palm room to which he escorted her and his sister, Alla relaxed a little. In response to their tactful questions, she even talked of herself. Yes, she had only her mother and sister. Her father had died when she was ten. She had

been in America five years. She had come over with another family when she was fifteen, and had sent for her mother and sister two years later.

On the labor and privation of those two years she did not dwell, but the two who listened understood almost as much as if she had told them the sordid details. Now, things were going well. She had a permanent position and a fair salary. Her sister had a position, too. Her mother, still strong, did the work of the little home. The three were in perfect health; they had much to be thankful for. All this she told unsmilingly, in her grave, quiet way.

When Bob showed a disposition to draw out her philosophy of life, she met his inquiries with tolerant frankness.

"In that letter, so foolish, which I wrote to your sister," she said quietly, "I expressed what I felt. It is not enough that one eats and sleeps and works and has shelter. The animals in the fields have those things. There is something more! It is wrong that one should miss it."

"There are those who would tell you," remarked Bob smilingly, "that it is love."

For an instant only, her eyes met his. Then the guarded look deepened till her young face looked grim.

"A flame," she muttered, "that burns for a moment—and goes out."

The Van Dorns exchanged another glance. The host fixed a thoughtful gaze on the end of his cigar ash.

"I have a notion," he said slowly, "that perhaps the reason happiness does not come to us oftener is because we look for it too hard. It's an elusive bird, and it flies from the pursuer. It's like the experience we sometimes have in the jungle," he went on. "I've seen scientists wear themselves out for days and weeks, following some rare bird or hunting some rare plant. Then, by Jove, when they're 'all in,' and drop

from exhaustion, I've seen the rare bird appear on a branch above their heads, or the plant growing on the very ground where they've thrown themselves down."

Again the odd glint appeared in the girl's eyes.

"I have read that," she said, "in one of your books."

"Oh, yes," muttered Bob. Without quite understanding why, he felt slightly crestfallen. She made an obvious effort to put him at his ease.

"What is it that you seek in those wild places?" she asked. "Not alone to kill animals, surely?"

"No," he admitted, "Novelty, excitement, I suppose. Perhaps you would call it happiness."

"It is not enough," she said. "A man like you should marry, and have a large family, and devote your life to your children."

"Great Scott! Is that your idea of happiness?"

"No. I have told you I do not know what happiness is. That is my idea of duty."

"But, pardon me, as we're talking so frankly, perhaps you won't mind my asking if it isn't also your duty to have a large family and devote your life to your children?"

Bob grinned happily. He thought he had her there. But she shook her black head.

"I have already two children, my mother and my sister. They are as dependent on me as babies. My duty is to them."

Anne leaned forward.

"You love them?" she asked.

The girl's dark face softened.

"With all my heart."

"Then," said the older woman, "surely you should be happy in caring for them."

"That may be true, yet I am not. I only know that I should be wretched without them. You see," she patiently

explained, "I do not say I am unhappy. I say only that I am not happy."

"I don't believe she's a tenement girl at all," Anne confided to her brother, a little later, when the two were alone for a moment in the hotel lobby. In the dressing room, a maid, on her knees at the Russian's feet, was putting on the rubbers with which Miss Orleneff had thoughtfully provided herself; and Miss Orleneff was accepting the unusual attention quite as if it were a usual one. "I believe she's an anarchist or a nihilist, or something of the sort. She's too well educated, too sure of herself, to be one of the usual type. There's a mystery about her."

"I don't think so," said Bob. "She's just an unsatisfied girl who doesn't know what she wants. But she has no difficulty in making a map of life for us," he added grimly. "And one thing is certain, we're not making her happy to-day."

He spoke with a feeling that made his sister look at him in surprise. In answer to her unasked question he nodded.

"Yes, I'm interested," he admitted. "She has taken hold of my imagination. We must keep in touch with her. She's worth helping."

Anne considered the suggestion. "It won't work," she predicted. "She is not the sort one can patronize. And I believe," she added slowly, "that in her heart, she is laughing at us."

"I'm not going to patronize her," Bob said. He smiled into his sister's suddenly arrested eyes. "I haven't *quite* made up my mind," he said, under his breath, "but I *think* she's the girl I've been looking for." Without giving Anne time to reply to this surprising announcement, he went out to find his car.

He had looked forward to the thirty-mile motor trip by his guest's side, but before they started for Highcliff Farm, Alla showed that she had other views.

"Please let me sit out in front," she urged, "where I can see everything. The country will be beautiful, with all this fresh snow. I wish to see it. I have not many opportunities."

She took the seat beside the trim but automatic Martin, and Bob, in the limousine with his sister, watched her as they swept along. It was not easy going for the car. The roads were filled, almost blocked at times, by masses of new-fallen snow. But Martin was used to bad winds and heavy weather. The powerful car plunged ahead through the increasing darkness, hardly slackening the forty-mile-an-hour pace he had set when they left the city behind them. Occasionally Martin answered a question asked by his companion. Soon it was evident that the two were talking, Martin indifferently, with his eyes straight ahead on the road before him, Alla with her grave profile turned toward him. From his sheltered seat Bob watched it, clean-cut against the winter sky. He was in a mood his sister knew better than to interrupt; but she ventured one question.

"Bob," she asked hurriedly, "did you mean what you said at the Plaza——"

"I think so," he told her. "But we won't talk of it just now."

She caught his hand. "Oh, Bob," she begged, "promise me you won't do anything rash! Promise me you will wait till you know her better!"

"I'll wait," he agreed—"an hour or two, anyway!"

It was very dark when they reached the Van Dorn farm, which was one of Bob's experiments; but lights twinkled from its many windows like candles on a huge Christmas tree. As the big front doors swung open, the scent of evergreen and balsam came out to meet the new arrivals, along with the barking of excited dogs that leaped joyously at their master, and the sound of crackling logs blazing in the open fireplace in the wide hall.

"Ah!" cried Alla softly, as she stood still and looked around her, "I like this. I like this best of all!"

"Do you?" Bob asked eagerly. "I'm glad. For now, you see, you really are my guest for the first time. This is my farm we're visiting."

"I like it," she repeated.

Anne escorted her to her room, and there, in the soft candlelight and firelight, she studied the girl against the new background of her brother's suggestion.

"Rest for an hour," she suggested. "We dine at eight, and at ten, half the countryside will be here for Bob's annual country dance. It's a most democratic affair. Every neighbor within forty miles will come, and all the servants take part in the festivities."

Yielding to a sudden impulse, Anne bent and kissed her cheek.

"If Bob is going to marry her, I may as well be decent about it from the start," she reflected; but her heart was heavy as she went downstairs.

Bob Van Dorn was at his best that evening, and his best was very attractive. He and his sister and their guest dined alone, and Anne, watching her brother with critical affection, told herself that he had never been more charming. He was in high spirits, and, as always, his gayety stimulated her. She, too, was at her best. Something of their mood seemed to have communicated itself to Alla. Her somber eyes shone with new lights. The little twitch at the corner of the lips, which was her nearest approach to a smile, appeared and disappeared. Bob was satisfied. She liked his home, and, if not happy, was at least amused and content in it. He was sure of that.

He danced the first dance of the evening with her, and was not surprised by the lightness and grace of the slender body he held in his arms. He had known Alla would dance like that! He watched her dance with his



friends, and, following Anne's example, even with his butler and his chauffeur. She was dancing with Martin again when, late that night, Van Dorn sought

change my mind. Besides, I don't want to frighten her. A girl like that," he ended oracularly, "isn't carried off her feet in a day, you know."

a quiet corner where his sister was sitting, and dropped down beside her.

"Thank Heaven," he groaned, "I've got Mrs. Perry off my card for the evening. She weighs two hundred pounds, and she has rested every one of them on my feet every time we've danced."

His sister studied him in silence, then acted on a sudden resolution.

"Have you spoken to Alla yet?"

"Of course I haven't," he told her lightly. "I'm not a schoolboy, and I don't believe in such indecent haste."

"Then promise me you won't say anything definite for at least a month."

He hesitated.

"Possibly I won't," he conceded at last. "It's an important matter. I may



He stopped. Four startled Van Dorn eyes rested on Martin and Miss Orleneff, who stood before them. Martin was flushed and still breathing rather quickly from the exertion of the last one-step. Alla wore her usual calm.

"Mr. Van Dorn," said Martin, "may I have a word with you, sir?"

Anne tried to check him. Afterward she told herself that she had known what was coming. But Bob's thoughts were on Martin's companion.

"Why, of course," he said vaguely, "if it's something important. But won't it keep till morning?"

"No, sir, not very well—that is, Alla thinks——"

As abruptly as if some hidden spring in him had been touched, Bob wheeled to face his man.

"Alla?" he repeated sharply. "What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

Under the edge of his words Martin retreated a step, his clean-cut, weather-hardened young face flushing.

"Why, excuse me, sir——" he stammered confusedly.

Alla interrupted. She was looking at her host, and now at last he saw her smile. It was a wonderful smile. Even in the confusion of the moment, his heartbeats quickened under it.

"Martin is trying to tell you something," she said. "He is trying to tell you that we are to be married. And Martin hopes," she added formally, "that you will not object!"

For a second the world whirled under Van Dorn's feet, then slowly steadied itself. With a strong effort of will he grasped the situation.

"This is—rather—a surprise," he said, trying to speak lightly, "Suppose you tell us a little about it." He glanced at Anne, now standing in stunned silence beside him. "You see, my sister and I feel a certain responsibility. Have you known Martin long?"

Subconsciously, he hoped that he

would hear of some old love affair, suddenly revived.

"Since to-day," she said. "But what is that? To-day or the beginning of time, if the right ones meet, it is all the same, is it not? I had never met the right one before, but at once I knew that this was he."

Still staring at her, Bob asked a pregnant question.

"How did you know?"

She answered with utter simplicity.

"Because he is different from other men. They stare, they ogle, they get sentimental, they make love. At once they do it—all of them."

Bob felt his face burn.

"But Martin," she ended, "I sit beside him for an hour, and he does not seem to know that I am there. I speak to him and he hardly hears me." She drew a deep breath. "That is wonderful!" she ended simply.

Miss Van Dorn took a determined part in the surprising conversation. After all, this extraordinary young person was one of her girls.

"But doesn't all this seem very abrupt, Alla?" she asked. "You never spoke a word to Martin until you drove out to the farm this afternoon, did you?"

"No," smiled the girl.

"On such short acquaintance——" Anne began.

Alla interrupted her.

"I waited until I was sure," she explained earnestly. "It was not until I thought it over all evening, that I told Martin."

"Told Martin!" gasped her hostess. "What, in Heaven's name, did you tell Martin?"

There was a suggestion of patient forbearance in Alla's manner and tone as she replied:

"I told him he and I would be married," she said simply. "From the time we talked this afternoon, I knew it. And very soon Martin knew it, too."

He saw it as I did, and all the things that I wished to know he told me. Martin is very wise!"

Anne threw up her hands and dropped helplessly back into the seat from which she had risen. Bob roused himself to meet this crisis in the life of a valued employe.

"How about you, Martin?" he asked. "Are you, so to speak, in on this arrangement?"

Martin grinned fatuously. He was a serious young man. The grin lit up his face to a surprising degree. "Yes, sir," he said. "So far as I'm concerned, it's agreeable to me." He seemed to feel that something more was needed. "It's *most* agreeable, sir," he added emphatically.

Bob smiled at last—rather stiffly, his sister thought; still, it was a smile, and it grew as she watched it.

"And your mother," he reminded Alla; "will she approve?"

"Yes," Alla told him. "Martin will live with us. And I shall keep on with my work. That is arranged. My mother would regret much if I should miss the right man when he comes. She has often said so."

Bob drew a long breath. "All right," he agreed. "There seems nothing left but to go into the dining room and celebrate the occasion."

Later that evening the serene Miss Orleoneff opened for Miss Van Dorn another window in her shuttered soul.

"Tell me one thing," Anne had said. "Are you happy at last?"

Alla regarded her with a smile that held a suggestion of tolerant understanding.

"I think I am happy, for now, at least, I know the truth," she said dreamily, gazing at the chauffeur as he passed

dishes of ice cream to his fellow guests. "Martin is so wise."

Miss Van Dorn pricked up her ears. Though reasonably observant, she had never discovered either wisdom or sentiment in Martin. It was difficult to realize that even a beam from the sun of romance had lit up the matter-of-fact recesses of Martin's mind. As for wisdom—

"One thing which he has said to me shows me that I shall not make a mistake when I marry Martin," continued Alla.

"What was it?" Anne demanded, without shame. Afterward, in repeating the conversation to her brother, she explained that she simply *had* to know.

"He said to me: 'Alla, there is nothing in this happiness stuff. Take it from me,' he said, 'human beings are not made to be happy. They *can't* be. Only fools expect it. The thing for sensible men and women to do is to work hard and go through life in couples. Then they can take half the weight off their troubles by carrying them together.' That is what Martin has said. Is it not wisdom? Tell me, for you should know."

Miss Van Dorn smiled forgivingly. She suddenly comprehended that everything was turning out for the best, in a satisfactory world. Her brother was not to be permitted to make a marriage that might ruin his life. Also, if only for an instant, this girl was sitting at her feet—which was where she should be. The glow of the moment illumined even Martin's philosophy. Anne grasped the proffered wreath of her infallibility, and firmly pressed it on her austere brow.

"It is perhaps one answer to the question," she handsomely conceded.



# At Blimmer's

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Dreamers of Dreams,"  
"Pemberley," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY  
CLARENCE ROWE

How the pictured face  
of a certain soldier boy  
saved a girl from dishonor.



"Why, Mrs. Blimmer!"  
she exclaimed, taking  
up the photograph.  
"Do you know him—  
Peter Jayne?"

AS the train curved up along the river bank, crossed the broad silver stream, and wound among the folded hills, wheezing more desperately as it climbed toward the mountains, Lorna kept thinking more and more about The Boy.

It was a freak of pure unreason, of course. She had never been in love with The Boy, she had no slightest shadow of responsibility toward him, and she had been in love with Vance, so she told herself, from the day of their meeting, and felt that she owed him all that love owes. The Boy was less than nothing to her. Oh, well, perhaps not quite that! A friend was a friend, and a necessary and desirable possession, but nothing to weigh in the

balance against Vance. Her being here on the train, bound for Blimmer's, proved that Vance was everything to her, The Boy nothing. How tiresome, then, that she should keep picturing the surprised, the unbelieving look The Boy's face would wear, if he could see her, could know to what rendezvous she was hastening!

Well, he couldn't see her, he couldn't know, and it was none of his business, anyhow! He was in France, where he ought to be—

"Oh, dear God," prayed Lorna, quite unexpectedly, for she was rather proud of her agnosticism, "keep him safe!"

Why, why, should she be praying for The Boy on this day of all days? Why should she be remembering little scraps

of their year's comradely intercourse, there on the top floor of Mrs. Vanderwater's lodging house? She was on her way to live her own life as she had definitely decided to live it, and she had expected to be palpitantly expectant of the meeting with Vance.

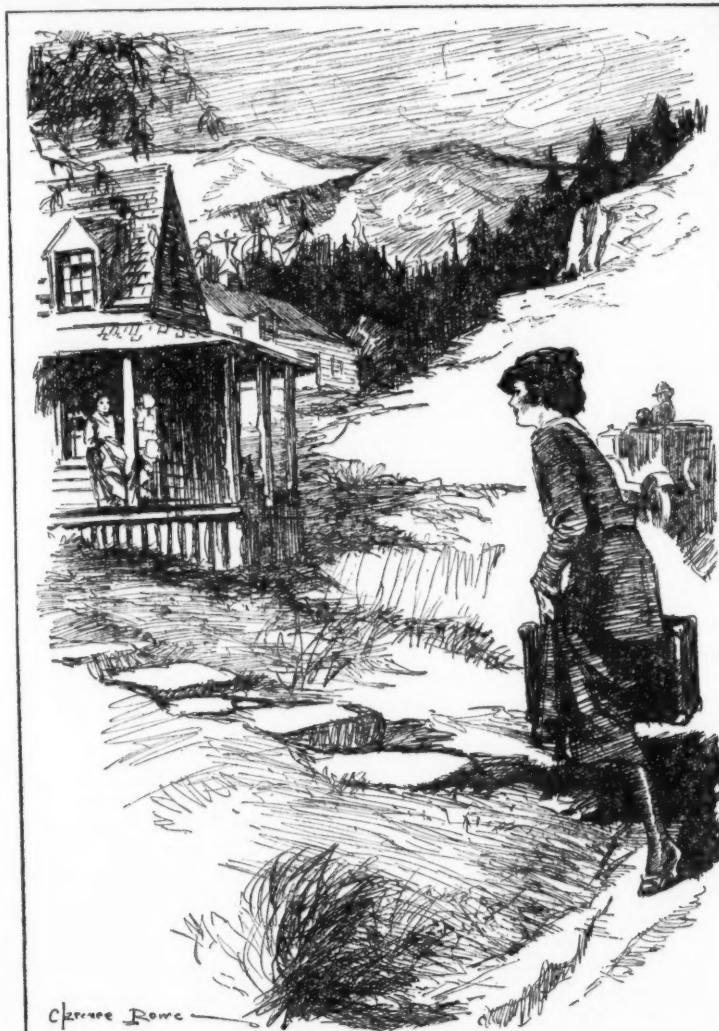
She had considered the whole thing fully, and she had reached her decision. Why, then, should her foolish thoughts fly about as though the question was still open? It was not. She had reached the end of balancing one good against another. She had chosen her course, accepted her fate. She loved Vance, though he was married, and he loved her. He had his clear duties—it was beautiful to her to remember how faithfully he felt them, how he permitted no storm of passion to sweep them away. There could be no question of his abandoning his wife, his children. Yet, since there was nothing anæmic—the word was Vance's—in their love, his and Lorna's, they had decided that it must have its way with them. It must no longer be denied, must no longer subsist upon crumbs. That was why she was going to Blimmer's. Up in the mountains that he loved, in the spring green and the blue and the clouds, they were to steal from life one perfect week—the first perfect week. They would nourish themselves upon its memory until the next perfect week could be stolen from life, without, of course, stealing anything from anybody!

It had hurt Lorna's pride that the week had to be clandestine. But Vance had made her see that it could not be otherwise. For them to defy the conventions would have resulted in the very things they had agreed must not be—cruelty to the wife who deserved no cruelty, irresponsibility to the children whom he loved and cherished. The perfect week had to be a secret week. They had to travel by different trains, to return singly, to register separately

at Blimmer's funny, old-fashioned hunting and fishing hotel. But Vance had known, almost uncannily he had known, just how to manage the whole affair. He had instructed her what room to write for. He had known about the rough balcony on to which that room, as well as his own, opened.

If they could only have made the journey together, she would not have kept on thinking about The Boy, and about the look of wonder and unbelief in his young eyes if he could be told, over there in France, what a journey she was taking to-day!

How much The Boy had always talked about himself! How full of youthful interest in his own concerns he had been! How simply he had taken it for granted that all the rest of the world was equally interested in them! That was the youngness of him—he was half a year younger than she, by actual time, and whole decades, Lorna felt, by emotion and experience. He would cross the stretch of hall between their two cheap, high, hot, little rooms at Mrs. Vanderwater's, and he would rap on her door, and announce that he had merely come to borrow some matches or shoe blacking or ink for his fountain pen, or to show her that he had been quite right last night when he had declared that the line from Herrick was thus-and-so; and then he would stay there for an hour, two hours—any length of time—the errand forgotten, while he discoursed and discoursed and discoursed. He would talk about the overcharges of the little tailor around the corner, or about the point at which the pure Marxian theory must break down, or about the squirrels in the park, or Cubism or the dress-suit convention as the final outrage upon a free manhood. He would talk about the fishing hole where he had caught scunners as a boy, and about the cattle he had chaperoned across the seas when he was seventeen, in his determination



"Ma" Blimmer was waiting to receive her. Vance had told her this would be so.

not to let the mere matter of passage money prevent him from seeing Europe. He would talk about the country school to which he had gone, and about the

fresh-water college from which he had broken loose, after the never-to-be-forgotten cattleship adventure.

And yet, he was never a bore. She supposed that was because there was, within him, a seed of genius. Untrained as yet, it kept putting forth shoots and tendrils in every direction, and they graced everything that they touched. Some day, when all his vast, wasteful, magnificent experimentation with ideas had ended, he would settle down to express one thing, and how he would express it!

Sharp tears stung her eyes. The Boy was in France, and maybe even now, at this very instant, all his talking, all his dreaming, all his high adventuring, were past. Thank Heaven! Vance, with his wife and his children, had had his adequate reason for staying at home! Of course, besides, he was much older than The Boy. The Boy was not yet twenty-four, and Vance was almost thirty-five.

The train ground its wheels to a standstill in a high, green duskiess. A mile below, the sun had lain warm and sweet upon a plateau, but here, the woods and the overshadowing of a mountain, made an early twilight, shot through with the spring's new emerald.

"Blim—mer's!" called the conductor, and Lorna, abruptly roused from her muddled dreams and recollections, started to her feet, caught her magazines under her arm, her week-end case by its handle, and got out on to the wooden platform. She was conscious of a hope that she had left The Boy on the train. If she was going to experience the ultimate joy of surrender to love, to her lover, she wanted to experience it with a whole mind, not to go through with it in a stupor.

It was curious, though, that The Boy should have been so much more insistently near her to-day than Vance, who had made her familiar with the trip, familiar with Blimmer's and all its cru-

dities and charm. This had been Vance's regular spring and fall holiday place ever since he had come out of the West. His wife did not like fishing. She did not care for "roughing it." She had never been here with him. Lorna was glad of that. She knew—Vance never failed to tell her—how fine and splendid, how broad-minded and generous, was her attitude toward the woman who kept her from her complete and open happiness, but she thought she had the right to a little jealous satisfaction over the fact that that woman had never been here with Vance.

"M's Jewt?" drawled a voice at her shoulder. She turned and nodded to a lean, rosy-faced lad. He took up her bag and led the way to the most ancient-looking Ford she had ever seen. She took her seat beside him, and they started off up the green defiles.

The boy was a talkative lad, and told her all about the spring fishing, as they drove, and about the guests at Blimmer's, and about the boys that had gone to the war from the mountains, and the news that their parents had had of them. He told her how he resented it that he was only fifteen years old, and therefore regarded, by a tyrannical society, as too young for fighting. He enlarged, in a spirit of boastfulness, upon what he would do if he were on the other side. And then, by and by, they drew up at the long, low, rough, brown shack that was Blimmer's Lodge, and that gave the name to all the region.

"Ma" Blimmer was waiting to receive her. Vance had told her that she would be. It was a hospitable custom which had been introduced by Mrs. Blimmer when she came to the Lodge. That had happened only ten years before, for Blimmer had been an inveterate bachelor, loud in the faith that "a woman hadn't no place around a fisherman's retreat." But, in an idle hour



he had gone away from home, venturing down the mountains and into Kingston, and there he had met his destiny, in the person of a widow who had become Mrs. Blimmer, and who had proved that woman is a great addition to a fisherman's retreat, both as hostess and as fellow sportsman. It had only been since her régime that women guests had been accommodated at the hotel. Lorna remembered all this as she took the plump, friendly hand extended to her. Ma Blimmer was a plump and friendly person, with black hair sparkling frostily, and bright eyes that danced in a laughter-wrinkled face. But despite her competently comfortable type, her nerves were not under good control, for, as they left the office where Lorna had registered, she dropped the girl's bag at the sound of the telephone bell, and put her hand to her broad, tight-girdled waist.

"I jump every time I hear it," she explained apologetically. "I've got a boy in France——"

It was not a death-dealing telegram that time, however, but merely a message from the freight agent at the station, who had neglected to tell the boy from Blimmer's of the arrival of two spring mattresses, and asked when she would send down for them.

"Like their shiftlessness!" commented Ma Blimmer, as she hung up the receiver, after a lively reply and a series of comments. "Those fellows down at the station don't do a thing from sunrise till sunset but sit and tell one another what they would do if they were Foch! Well, I don't claim to be much better myself."

They climbed the broad, shallow stairs that ran from the big, rock-chimneyed hall up to Blimmer's single upper story, and Ma Blimmer opened the door of the room Lorna had engaged, all soft brown with its matched board walls, and sweet with the tang of cedar.

"You never were here before," said Ma Blimmer. "How did you happen to know about this room?"

Lorna hoped that she did not blush.

"A friend of mine, Miss Kirkland," she lied, and hated the necessity for lying, "had it been last year—or was it the year before? And she told me to be sure to get it, if I could, because of the view of the Notch and Red Top from the little balcony."

"The year before last," supplied Mrs. Blimmer, half absently. "She was a nice girl. Is she well? She never came back, though she seemed kind of in love with the place."

"Yes, she's very well," murmured Lorna. "And the view is all she claimed for it." She stood at the door and looked up into the Notch, with blue hills folding, one upon the other, at its end.

"Yes." Mrs. Blimmer was frowning absent-mindedly, meanwhile considering. Then she cried impatiently: "Oh, the old cat's foot! There's the phone again!"

Lorna looked at her in quick surprise as she ran down the stairs. It was an ejaculation she had heard from only one other person, and on his lips it had always been comically incongruous, its back-country compromise with profanity so unlike all his other talk, with its boundless daring, its brilliancy, its youth! The Boy, again!

Ma Blimmer toiled up the stairs again. "If this war don't end soon, I won't have a real breath left in my body," she panted. "It was only Dad, though, phoning from Sander's Gap, where he drove a party last evening. But about that Miss Kirkland—are you in the same line of work that she was? Newspaper, wasn't she?"

"Yes. I mean yes, she was a newspaper woman. I'm an illustrator. Not a very good one yet. I'm not on the paper she was on. I just do commercial drawings."

"Maybe you're acquainted with the gentleman that recommended her to Blimmer's? Mr. Cothren?" There seemed a note of shrewdness in Ma Blimmer's new inquiry. Or was it merely her own nervous sensitiveness that made her think so. Lorna wondered.

"Yes, I know Mr. Cothren," she said. "He has often spoken of the fishing at Blimmer's. He is one of the editors on

Miss Kirkland's paper——" She wished that she could stop talking! Speech was almost sure to lead her into some indiscretion.

"Um-um," assented Mrs. Blimmer. "So they said. I guess all you writing and drawing folks know one another more or less. Mr. Cothren is coming up to-morrow for a week."

"Really?" Lorna doubted whether her tone had the surprised pleasure it was intended to convey, or whether it sounded as wooden to her interlocutor as it did to herself. "That will be very pleasant."

"Here's your bathroom," said the proprietress, opening the door of a room. "Hot and cold water—you'd scarcely expect all that, off in the woods, would you?" She spoke complacently. "But I came from the city, and when we were married and I came here to live, I said to Mr. Blimmer that if he wanted plenty of the best custom, he must give city conveni-



And then he put a friendly arm around the plump little woman who stood shuddering by him.

ences. Did you ever know a Miss Knowles?"

"No, I don't think I ever did."

"I didn't know but you might have. She came here one season. But that was some time ago—four or five years. She was a cousin of Mr. Cothren. I didn't know but you'd met her. Well, have you got everything that you want? This button is for that light, you see—and there's one of those adjustable reading lamps by your bed. Though most folks that come up here, don't do much reading when bedtime comes. If you find there's anything you want that you haven't got, just press that button. Or, better still, just poke your head into my door. That's my room across the hall—oh, the old cat's foot!" And she was gone again, and Lorna stood, rather tense and frightened, with The Boy's foolish old 'swear word' sounding in her ears.

Martha Kirkland—Miss Knowles—well, of course, it was perfectly natural!

She began to rub the cinders and dust of the journey from her face with cold cream. As she worked the cleansing, her eyes went out through the window toward the Notch and Red Top. Beautiful, beautiful! The flutter of fear and distrust in her heart became soothed. How familiar it seemed, the lovely vista! That, of course, was because Vance Cothren had such a gift for visualizing his impressions in words. Dear Vance, disappointed in the fondest hope of his life, of any man's life, the hope for a wife who would understand, who would sympathize! Dear Vance, to whom such long years of drab acceptance of duty were now to be compensated by the unquestioning gladness of her rich surrender!

She reached among her toilet things for absorbent cotton, for a soft cloth with which to remove the begrimed grease. She had none. She frowned at her oversight, and went into the little bathroom of which Ma Blim-

mer was so proud. It was fitted out with towels and washcloths, but Lorna hesitated to use the bleached, fine linens for the staining work.

She went to the door of her room. Ma Blimmer sat rocking in a big hickory and splint chair in the room opposite. Lorna, laughing and veiling her face with her hand, crossed the hall, and stated her need for a piece of absorbent cotton. And while the proprietress procured it for her she looked about her curiously at the homely room, with its treasures, and its marks of occupation. Suddenly she gave a little cry.

"Why, Mrs. Blimmer!" she exclaimed, crossing to the bureau and taking up the big, framed photograph of a boy in uniform. "Do you know him—Peter Jayne?"

"Well, rather!" said Mrs. Blimmer. "He's my boy. My boy by my first husband. Why, do you know him?"

"Indeed, I do! It's been the queerest thing—I have been thinking of him all the way up here—felt almost as if he were on the train. Why, he used to talk about his mother, but he never told us your name. I don't think he ever mentioned that he had a stepfather."

"No, they got along finely from the first," said Mrs. Blimmer complacently. "There wasn't any 'step' about it. It was 'Dad' and 'Sonny' right from the beginning. Of course, Peter wasn't around here much after the first few years. We sent him away to school—his own father was a well-educated man, and we didn't want Peter to miss anything he'd have had from him. But you tell me where you knew him."

Lorna sat down on a little rocker that was like the little daughter of Mrs. Blimmer's big rocker, and she talked of Mrs. Vanderwater's, of the aspiring youth gathered under that dingy roof, of the talk, the gayety, the good fellowship. And the mother drank it in eagerly.

"I know now, why the view of Red Top and the Notch seemed so natural to me when I looked out my window," the girl ended suddenly. Then she paused, and her eager face lost a little of its light for a second. "Peter had a big picture of that vista on his wall. I remember now. I—I—wondered why it seemed so natural. I was thinking it was because I had heard so much about it. He never happened to say where it was—" Her voice fell flat, a little hurt. But the mother was not critical of tones just then.

"He always liked that view. I guess he took the picture one summer when he was back here, experimenting with photographs—scenic photographs, I think he called them. He was always experimenting with something. There never was such a boy for experimenting. He—he—you were fond of him, weren't you? Everybody was."

"Of course, everybody was—is, I mean," cried the girl. "And to think you should be his mother—the mother he used to talk about! He adored you, you know, in his funny way."

"We've always meant a lot to each other," stated Mrs. Blimmer, striving after matter-of-factness, and just failing to achieve it.

"It must have hurt you dreadfully to see him go!"

"It would have hurt me dreadfully to see him stay!" There was energy in the response. "I'd have felt that all my being his mother went for nothing—or worse, that I had planted some bad seed in him. To be open and aboveboard with man, woman, and child, to be kind to them all, and, yes, to God's dumb creatures, too, and never to be afraid of anything on the green footstool but what was sly and mean—that was the way I meant to bring him up by example and precept. And it would have broken my heart if he hadn't gone at the first call of his country."

Lorna went back into her room

slowly, a little dazed. Peter Jayne! Peter, whose presence had been with her all through the journey that she was taking for love of another man! She remembered that when she had kissed Peter good-by in Mrs. Vanderwater's top hall the morning that he went away, he had clung to her, and had cried, "Oh, do you really mean it, Lorna, old pal?" She had laughed chokingly and had answered, "Of course, I do, Boy—that I love you, and wish you luck, and will knit for you all the time you're gone." And he had laughed, too, the momentary threat of mature love dissipating in the old comradeship and easy fondness, and had answered her! "Wait till I come back, and I'll make you mean more than that!"

And this was Peter's mother—this plain, dear, rosy country woman, with her plain, unsubtle creed, her narrow vision.

Martha Kirkland—Miss Knowles. Vance had never spoken of a cousin, a woman cousin.

How Mrs. Blimmer, who had brought her boy up in such a primitive faith of right and wrong, would shudder to know why she, that son's intimate friend, was here among the woods and the hills with their brooding, tender patience!

Vance was coming on the night train. He would be there for breakfast. He would arrange, in some way—he was deft and diplomatic—that it would seem natural for his table to be hers. But would it seem natural? Had there not been question in Ma Blimmer's voice? Or was it only her guilty conscience that had heard it there?

The Boy— No wonder he would stare at her with amazement and utter incredulity, if he could see her and could know what had brought her here. No wonder, with that mother of the limited ideas of right and wrong. When The Boy was older, of course he

would understand better. He had the making of a greatly understanding soul in him. She might wish that his spiritual presence did not seem so to dominate the place she and Vance had chosen for their own!

She came in from a little before-supper saunter up a near-by hill. The fishermen and fisherwomen were coming in with their day's catches. There was the odor of frying bacon and of brewing coffee on the air. The last light was gone from the topmost peak. A welcoming fire leaped in the big stone fireplace in the hall.

The telephone rang, and Ma Blimmer bustled to it. They heard her preliminary words, and then they heard: "Some one, come—come quick. I don't hear what they are saying."

A man sprang to her rescue, and took the message. And then he put a friendly arm around the plump little woman who stood shuddering by him, looking up into his face with stricken eyes, and the parted lips of one who gasps for breath.

"Don't give way, Ma Blimmer," he cried. "It isn't as bad as it might be. 'Severely wounded' doesn't mean done for, by a long shot. And probably tomorrow you will get another, to say that to-day's message is a mistake. Why, 'severely wounded' may mean nothing but a scratch, and a tired clerk somewhere along the line."

Ma Blimmer looked around dazedly. Her eyes fell on Lorna. She put out her hand, and Lorna went to her.

"You said you had been thinking about him all day," the older woman

said, clinging to her hand. "You said you felt him near you on the train, didn't you? It was because he was near you. He's wounded over there, and his thoughts are wandering back home, up the road he used to travel. Don't you believe it?"

"Yes," said Lorna obediently.

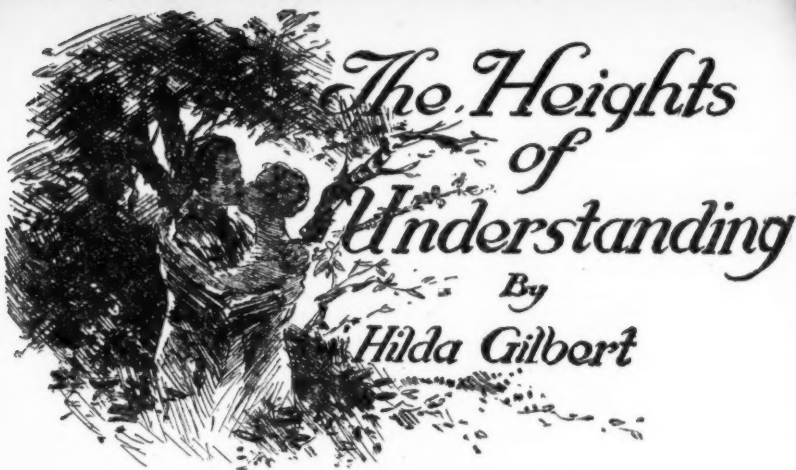
"Well," said the older woman, with sudden courage, "I wouldn't ask my boy to do what I couldn't do myself. I raised him to bear with whatever comes, without a quiver. So—so I won't make any fuss. I won't do anything different from any other spring night. He's wounded—but he's living, for his thoughts came with you this day, up along the river and over the hills. How long were you going to stay, my dear? You must stay until we get the next message—you must stay and give me heart. Come upstairs with me now. I want to change your room. I hate to say such a thing to you, but I don't like you to have that room you've got. Those two girls I was telling you about—friends of your friend—I don't like to think evil of any one. But I am going to change your room. You don't mind, do you?"

"I am glad you are going to change it," said Lorna.

What a change a few hours could make! Vance seemed remote, and all his protestations sounded hollow in her memory. She even felt only indifference about those other women, companions of spring trips in the past.

She had again a vision of The Boy's face, and it seemed to her that it wore a look of glad relief.





ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

**It takes a war-time generation to understand the emotional problems created by war. This story throbs with the realities of life.**

**I**N the exclusive little Southern city of Melton, on a November evening but a year back, actually, yet seeming more remote, now that each day unrolls a fresh page of history, the windows in the long, oaken-paneled dining room of an old colonial mansion were flung wide to the scent-laden evening breeze. Satinlike damask, glittering cut glass, and heavy, old-fashioned silver all seemed fitting accessories to the three exquisite women, each of a successive generation, seated at the round table.

They were singularly alike, each beautiful, each with the proudly poised head, clean-cut nostrils, and sleek, arched brows of the aristocrat; and at the same time they were vaguely, intangibly unlike. Leila, the youngest, was like a princess from between the covers of a book of fairy tales. Fragile-seeming, with little pointed chin, wide gray eyes, sensitive mouth, slightly too full perhaps, but fascinating in its soft, upturned curves, a mouth made for

kisses. Her quiet, natural dignity, almost hauteur at times, and at strange variance with the childishness of her face and figure, hinted of future possible bursting into the exotic beauty of her brilliant mother, when the fragility of youth merged into robust maternity.

At this time, her seventeenth birthday just passed, she bore greater likeness to her grandmother. And if the girl was like a princess, the old lady might have been a fairy queen from the same book. Her fine-grained, unlined face like old ivory, framed in white hair, done always in the latest mode, eyes tender and undimmed by her years, this fine, high-bred woman hinted of hard-held serenity, a scathless immaculateness, reminding one of moonlight lying silvery upon waxen lily pads in a cool, still pond. The girl suggested the passing of night breezes over spicy carnations, or the foam-flecked crest of a wave, and her mother was like a precious stone polished to perfect and brilliant completeness.



Early that very morning, pealing of bells, whistles, shouts of joy, and lusty cheers had proclaimed the world's release from the thralldom of blood lust and brutality. To each of these women, aside from the great impersonal joy, this had brought its own message.

Underneath the surface brilliancy of small talk, an undercurrent of unrest had rendered the dinner oppressive to all three. To Mrs. Hampton particularly, the air seemed heavy with pre-science of immediate and tragic climax to the bitterly waged struggle, months long, between her daughter and granddaughter. Her sympathies mostly with the girl, so young, so pretty, so dauntless in her love; her heart ached for both, although she had kept steadily to her policy of noninterference.

Of late, watching this dearly beloved only grandchild growing paler day by day, slender shoulders beginning to sag ever so slightly, and a little shadow of fear constantly flicking in and out her eyes, dark-ringed with weariness, in the pallor of her young face, horror tugged at the old lady's heartstrings.

Mrs. Lowden also felt the strain of her long and steady opposition to her daughter's marriage with the young lover now overseas. The prospect of his immediate return after so short an absence irked her. Added to that domestic worry brought about by the necessity, to her mind, of dismissing a maid who had been with her since going into service, called to the surface all the rancor which her daughter's unheard of rebellion had planted deep within her heart.

The new maid having served dinner and withdrawn, she voiced her grievance for the upsetting of her former well-regulated life.

"I do hope we can now get back to something like system without all these upsetting occurrences. I can't tell you, mother, how that affair of Judy has upset me. To have to let her go after

I had trained her just as I wanted her, too. I'm sure this one will never do so well. She seems positively stupid."

Leila leaned nearer her mother and only the grandmother noted the strained eagerness in her voice:

"Why did you make her go then, mother?"

Mrs. Lowden's tones were acrid. "You know the reason as well as I do, Leila. Why ask absurd questions?"

The girl answered slowly, a little frown creasing her smooth brow. "But mother, if she was—in trouble—shouldn't we have—have——"

"Have what?"

"Kept her here—befriended—helped her."

"My dear, it's a question I can scarcely discuss with you. Really, girls do talk of the most appalling things lately, which they never used to! It was chiefly on your account that I had to let her go, Leila."

"Why?"

"You are altogether too young to enter into any discussion of the matter."

"Hm! I'm perfectly aware that babies do not grow on trees, and so are all the other girls I know, mother. Besides, Judy loved this boy. She told me so."

"Told you so! Told you so!" Mrs. Lowden repeated as though doubting the evidence of her own ears. "Leila, do you mean to say you discussed this with Judy, allowed a servant to talk to you about her disgraceful conduct?"

"Yes, mother, I was sorry for her. I told her that I would do anything for her that I could. Oh, mother, she's so unhappy. People are unkind to her, and she doesn't know whether he'll ever come——" She stopped abruptly, teeth caught in lower lip to still its trembling, eyes grown suddenly dark with anguish.

"Well, I never! I'm very glad I had the good sense to get rid of her at once. She's bad all through." This brought



Mrs. Lowden rose to her feet, and for a heart beat's count they stood facing, hostile glance flicking



hostile glance, rapierlike.

a quivering little sigh from Leila and remonstrance from Mrs. Hampton.

"Hardly that, Elizabeth. She is young, she loved him, and he was leaving perhaps forever. No, no, I should never call Judy bad."

"Why, mother, she was perfectly defiant about it! If she had been the least bit repentant I should have had more sympathy for her, but she seemed to be almost glad. She refuses to give his name, says they will be married if he comes back. I should hope so! It is dreadful the way girls of that class have been behaving. Why, they say at the Red Cross rooms that the problem in this very city is frightful."

"The older women ought to be very kind and gentle with these poor young things now, Elizabeth."

"Kind and gentle! They are bad, mother, or such things could not happen to them. They merely used the war as an excuse for their own low tastes. Kind and gentle, indeed! We should use all our influence to have them put in reform schools, where our own daughters need never see them."

At the entrance of the maid with coffee, Leila suddenly pushed back her chair and rising, stood in the mellow glow from shaded lights, finger tips resting lightly upon the table, pink nails shining against white damask. Meeting her mother's questioning uplift of brow, her eyes grew slightly hard, softening again to her grandmother's fond glance.

"Please excuse me, mother.

I don't care for coffee to-night. I—I—want to be alone." Mrs. Lowden laughed shortly.

"You're not very flattering, Leila. But surely we'll excuse you, if we bore you."

"Mother—*please!*" There was tearful appeal in her voice. She hesitated a second, swaying slightly where she stood, then with drooping shoulders turned toward the door, to stop abruptly as her mother spoke further:

"Just a moment, my dear. I'm writing the Mortons that we will be ready to join them on whatever date they set, for our trip to Japan. Now that the war is over, we can look forward to traveling comfortably again, thank Heaven!" In the silence following, the girl's body grew tense and seemed to grow taller.

"I'm not going, mother."

"Not going! Whatever do you mean?"

"Just that."

"But—"

"Why discuss it? I shan't go!"

"Why—I've promised for you."

"You had no right to promise for me. You knew well I wouldn't—" Of a sudden her defiance seemed to drop from her like an ill-fitting cloak, and she was again the pleading child. "Oh, mother, won't you please try to understand? I haven't changed my mind since Frank went away."

"Neither have I!" Mrs. Lowden rose to her feet and for a heartbeat's count they stood facing, hostile glance flicking hostile glance, rapierlike.

Mrs. Hampton coughed significantly, delicately; these scenes were in such bad taste and always painful to witness. Her daughter taking the quietly given hint, again seated herself.

"We won't discuss it now, Leila. I'll come up and talk with you later."

"Not to-night, mother, please. I want to be quite alone." She turned to the door, then paused, twisted half round,

hand upon the knob, eyes bright with unshed tears, words tumbling with mixture of defiance and pathos from trembling lips between quickly caught half sobs. "I'm going to wait for Frank no matter what you say—and when he does come home, we shall marry—with your consent—or without it!" The door closed sharply upon her final words, and Mrs. Lowden turned an amazed face to her mother.

"Well! What is the world coming to? I never caused you such trouble, mother. Why must I have a disobedient child?" Mrs. Hampton stirred her coffee deliberately an instant, then replied:

"No, my dear, you never caused me any trouble. You always, from a little child, did the proper thing. But you see, Leila is more like me, that is why I understand her so well."

"Like you! What utter nonsense! I'm sure you never behaved so absurdly—and you certainly made a suitable marriage."

"Yes—a—suitable marriage."

"I had no idea that Leila could be so stubborn. Just like her father. I must get her away before that miserable boy comes back, or we shall have the whole thing to go over again."

"Those two young things do love pathetically."

"Pathetic is the word, mother. Puppy love!" She sighed heavily. "I have given my whole life to that girl—then, to have her behave like this! Paul Morton is quite as handsome and charming as Frank, shamelessly rich and fairly out of his head over her. I don't understand her at all."

"She'll never love any one else, Elizabeth. Our little girl is a one-love woman. I know."

"She'll have to learn to respect some one else, then. That's the best foundation for marriage, after all; I never did believe in these foolish infatuations. You know, mother, she wasn't brought

up to marry a poor man. After all, I'm looking out for her best interests, and at times one would almost think she hated me. There's the gratitude of the modern girl!"—a hasty glance at the clock as she arose from the table. "Oh, dear, I shall be so glad when we return to normal again, if we ever do. I'll be late at the club, now. I did intend to have another look at my speech and a talk with that stubborn child." Mrs. Hampton walked by her daughter's side to the door, there to lay a gently restraining hand upon her arm.

"Do me a favor, dear. You have always been so good to me that I haven't had a chance to ask for many. Don't trouble the child to-night; she has some rights you know, and she said she wanted to be alone." Mrs. Lowden made an impatient gesture.

"But the Mortons are waiting for our decision, mother." Then looking down into the suddenly tear-misted eyes, she stooped to lay a kiss upon the old lady's lips. "Oh, well, dear, since you ask it—but to-morrow we must have this settled, and I shall depend on you to help me, dear."

Alone in her room as softly satiny pink as the heart of a rose, Leila knelt by the window, chin dropped to cupped hands, memories winging their way throughout her brain fabric with the clean-cut sequence of pictures thrown upon the screen.

Her school days, when Frank, four years older than herself, was even then her hero; her coming-out dance; their first kiss; their engagement and dismay at her mother's unaccountable, and to them, unreasonable objection; their plans made secretly in the rose-hued optimism of youth, to wait until he could prove his worth, firm in the belief that their love must win them their desire.

Then the cataclysm which had plunged the whole world into bereavement, and their renewed efforts to gain

her mother's consent to their marriage. Kneeling here now, half child, half woman, she pondered upon the strangeness of it all. But a short time before, life had seemed so secure. She had looked forward to a church wedding, with all its trappings; white satin, orange blossoms, music, bridesmaids; going away amid a shower of rice and good wishes; coming back to a little home of her own, there to live in peace and serenity as her grandmother and mother had done. So little to ask from life! And now——

Forehead suddenly dropped to folded hands, a tremulous little sob forced its quivering way to her lips. Now what? This called forth another and more recent picture embedded in her mind—frightened little Judy, a full year younger than herself, eyes rolling in bewilderment in the twisted terror of her face.

"I jest kain't be sorry, Miss Leila. I ain't bad! I ain't! I kain't feel that-away, no matter how hard I tries. I loved 'im, that's all—jes' loved 'im. Ef yo' mother ketch me talkin' 'bout this to you-all, she going gimme what fo'. I reckon I ain't fitten to be in the same room with yo', nohow."

Putting both hands upon the girl's shoulders she had bent pityingly over the brown quivering face, her own as purely white as a pearl, and whispered:

"Judy, I know that you're not bad. I'm sorry for you, so sorry Judy, and I'll do anything I can to help you. When he comes back, everything will be made right, you'll see."

The girl had burst into harsh racking sobs at this.

"No, Miss Leila, he ain't nevah comin' back. Spite of all my brave talk to mammy, I jes' knows he ain't. I feels it layin' here like a stone." Her lean hands clutched at her thin chest. "He ain't nevah comin' back to me no mo'. But I'se glad fo' what I done. I jes' kain't feel sorry nohow."

Head thrown back, eyes shining with the mysticism inherent in her race, Judy forgot the shame and disgrace in her one moment of exaltation, then crumpled again to frightened sobbing, and ran from the room.

Following hard on this memory, Leila's thoughts plunged straight back to the night before Frank went away. They had thrown themselves almost hysterically into the gayety of the Country Club dance, in spite of, or perhaps, because the thought of imminent parting lay leadenly in their hearts. Afterward, hoping thus to prolong their time together, they had walked home and her mother, having won thus far, offered no demur to this.

Their way had led through a wooded glen, and sudden silence had fallen upon them as they struck the trail between tall-topped trees spiking against the blue velvet dome above. Even now, each little moment, each slightest detail of that last walk, stirred in her heart poignantly. She recalled the spring of damp turf beneath her feet, magnolia-scented breeze lifting her curls, infrequent glimpsing of stars so far above and coldly remote; and the quiet—the hush that lies upon a wood at night. One could almost hear thoughts.

They had walked slowly, hand in hand like two little children, speaking no word because of the pain in their hearts, each in thought, counting the few moments left out of an eternity which spelled for them but tragedy.

Suddenly he had stopped and turned to draw her into his arms, strong young face bent to hers, muscles in his lean jaw working convulsively, voice husky.

"Leila, sweetheart—you will wait, won't you? You won't let her make you forget?" At that, a laugh had struggled up through her pain-constricted throat, to lie, for an instant, upon her lips, then quiver to a pitiful little sob. Forget him! As well forget she lived and breathed! Clinging to-

gether under the soft Southern sky, their tears and kisses mingling, they had repeated the promises of lovers since time was.

When he whispered: "If I never come back—" she had stopped him, sobbing out broken words of endearment against his lips, between her kisses, salty with the flavor of bereavement, weeping out all her anguish upon his breast.

Of a sudden, both had found themselves adrift upon a sea of emotion, beating in upon inherited traditions, washing away all barriers of training and convention, overwhelming in its force, completely submerging them. Alone in a world determined to separate them, this one little moment theirs, he fighting to have and to hold his own, she, no longer child, but woman, and reckless of consequence.

When they had finally parted, both a little frightened, both exalted, he had held her close, kissing her young forehead, furrowed now in bewilderment and pain, her wide frightened eyes, her trembling mouth.

"You are mine now, dearest. Nothing can alter that. Mine forever—say it, darling!" In a hushed little voice she had repeated:

"Yours forever and forever."

Afterward she had stolen into the house and up to her room, to lock herself in with the sweetly bitter chaos of her thoughts. Her grandmother had shortly afterward knocked upon the door, mumuring tenderly:

"Leila—little Leila, is there anything grandma can do for you?" She remembered now, how she had struggled to control her tears as she had answered:

"No, granny dear, nothing—nothing."

All that long and dreary night she had sobbed away her girlhood. And the time since—only three months in fact, yet seeming an eternity—had been al-





"Mother! Say  
it isn't true—  
say it isn't!"

most unbearable. But now, a little prayer of gratitude lifted liltily in her heart, for the message that the pealing bells had that morning given all the world. When he came back—soon now, surely—strength would be given them to combat her mother for their happiness, even to the point of confession.

At that, her head drooped again, and

the little flickering gleam of fear leaped into her eyes. After all, she was only a child, a tenderly shielded, carefully nurtured child, and in the last few months she had faced possible shame and disgrace; had awakened night after night, terror-stricken from dreams of pointing fingers and jeering tongues, for she knew well the world's attitude toward all women who sinned.

The clock striking two brought her back to the present and the recollection that she had heard her mother return some time before. But the tumult in her heart and mind told her that sleep was impossible. Perhaps a book would prove sedative for the vivid, stinging thoughts pounding in her brain. She stole from her room, to run fleet-footed and quietly past the door where the hum of voices indicated that her mother and grandmother were still awake. Humming a gay little air for the first time in months, she paused beside the library table to pick up the evening paper still folded—

Mrs. Hampton smiled in her daughter's face as she opened the door to her knock.

"Well, how did the speech go?"

"Oh, as usual—every one seemed to like it." Feeling her knees suddenly give way she sank to a chair. "I've had a shock, mother. Have you seen the evening paper?"

"No, dear. Why?"

"It was so unexpected—he went over so late and all that, you know. Of course, after Leila is over her first sorrow— Why, mother, whatever is the matter?"

She sprang to her feet to put her arms about the old lady who stood with hands pushed out, as though to ward off a blow, body waving unsteadily, as from white lips she breathed a question:

"Not—not—Frank?"

"Who else? Leila doesn't know yet. Poor child, I expect we shall have a hard time with her, at first." She eased the old lady to a chair. "Really, mother you mustn't take it like that—all things considered, it seems almost providential."

"Elizabeth, how can you? Our baby—our little girl."

"Oh, Leila is young. After a few years this will be nothing more to her than a romantic memory—you'll see."

Seeming not to hear, Mrs. Hampton sat staring into space, face strangely drawn, hands twisting in her lap, while from white lips, words fell disconnectedly and without meaning to her daughter.

"I might have saved her this—had I been brave enough. Now—now—her life spoiled—ruined—waste—all—all waste! If only I had induced you to allow them to marry."

"Mother, you must be mad! That wouldn't have made her grief any less, and her position would have been worse—a widow—and there might have been results."

"There might be now."

Mrs. Lowden faced her mother haughtily.

"Now I know you have lost your reason! Do you mean to insinuate that Leila—that any one of our family could get into a vulgar affair like that miserable little Judy?"

"Oh, Elizabeth, one of our family or one of another. What does it matter? In a time through which we have just passed, young things who love, looking forward to the loss of all they hold dear, swept beyond control, unable to resist the call of their hearts, grasp their little bit of happiness while they may!"

"Mother you are perfectly incomprehensible. Why you seem to be almost in sympathy—"

"I am in sympathy, dear, with all who suffer. I am conscience-stricken, too; had I told you what I must tell you now—I might have saved Leila disgrace, at least. But a mother hates to lose her daughter's respect."

"Dear, as though anything in this world could make you lose my respect."

"Oh, how sweet that sounds to me. I have tried to be a good mother to you, to make up for what—" She broke off suddenly, yearning eyes meeting those loving ones bent upon her. "Elizabeth, bring a chair and sit close

to me. Now—now—take my hands in yours and hold them—tight—tight—yes, yes, like that, and say again 'Dear little mother——' It may be the last time I shall ever hear it just like that."

Wondering, Mrs. Lowden soothed her as she might a little child.

"Dear little mother. Come, you're overwrought, dear. Let us not talk any more to-night."

"I must tell you now—for Leila's sake—while I have the courage." Her voice sank to tense monotone:

"When I was just Leila's age, my father opposed my marriage to the man I loved. When the war broke out, he joined the colors——" She paused to steady trembling lips, then went on brokenly: "The night before he left, forgetting my training, my obligations to my class and race; knowing that he was going out to horror and possible death—I—I—gave myself to him——"

"Mother! You!"

"Then I learned there was to be a little child. Soon afterward he was killed. His chum who had always loved me—learned what had happened, through his dying delirium—he got short leave—came back—and offered me marriage—to save my name. I was so young—so frightened of what my father, in his Southern pride, might do if he learned the truth, that I grasped at this to save myself. I married him without love—and I still hold that my greater sin. But he was a good husband to me, and like a father to you—even though——"

"Even though—— Mother!" On her feet now, her whole world seeming shattered to bits, Mrs. Lowden grasped her mother's shoulders, nails biting into the tender flesh. "Mother—say it isn't true—say it isn't! Leave me that much at least!" Then reading confirmation in the dropping head, she turned away, racked with sobs.

"Mother, you've crushed my pride into the earth. And now—now—you

say that Leila—that child—— I tell you it can't be true! It's unthinkable! And yet—you!" Suddenly, her old pride and self-conscious righteousness reasserting itself, she cried out:

"If it is true, if she has done this thing that you say, if she has disgraced me—I'll never look upon her face."

Mrs. Hampton arose with a suddenness that overturned her chair, both hands flung out pleadingly.

"Don't say it, Elizabeth! Stop and think! You and your generation have lived in peace and serenity. You weren't torn up by the very roots when you were still too young to know the meaning of life; you haven't felt the whole world rocking about you in uncertainty and torment; you haven't wakened in the night with empty arms and tortured heart, picturing a loved one suffering and knowing yourself powerless to assuage. Your heart hasn't been so pierced and torn that you have grown to pity every living thing—yes, to pity God himself because of the world's grief and despair. Those of Leila's generation and mine have learned charity through our own——" The words froze upon her lips.

At that moment, the door swung wide. The girl, tottering upon the threshold, long fair hair falling over her face, agonized eyes seeking her grandmother, thrust out a tattered newspaper; her voice cold and bleak, like bare branches rubbing in a wind:

"Grandma—he's gone! He'll never come back—it says so here, grandma! Nev-e-r—coming back!" The paper fluttered to the floor, two little hands clutched at her heart, her voice broke, then rose to childish whimper: "It hurts so here, grandma! I—I—don't think I—can—bear—it!"

"Leila darling, what can mother do for you?" A little frown creased the girl's brow, she stared an instant as though she saw her mother for the first time, then turned away from her out-

stretched arms, words dripping from her lips, starkly:

"You—can't—do anything—now—mother. You're—too—late! You're too late!"

Straight as a homing bird, she went to the arms of her grandmother, cling-

ing convulsively to her, while the tender hands patted her shoulders in the time-old gesture of comforting, as she sobbed out:

"Grandma—take me away—just we two alone—away from every one, grandma!"



### PERSONAL EQUATION

WHILE they waited in the hotel parlor, both women spent the time making a mental tabulation of each other. Thought the elder:

"What a frivolous young fool! Her eyes are as devoid of expression as glass marbles. She cannot concentrate for a minute on that book. Brainless! I can smell her awful perfume over here. Probably a chorus girl. What a vulgar hat! Her dress is eccentric and too gorgeous. But her boots are good. Such queer jewelry! I suppose her hands, when ungloved, are laden with foolish rings. I wouldn't trust her far. A man chaser, that's easily seen."

The younger thought:

"An old frump! Just look at that beaded bonnet and that old-fashioned ruff. A disagreeable face! How she stares and frowns at every one! I wonder what I've done. She's a Purity League lady, I imagine—or a sour old maid. I'm almost afraid to look at her. She could give one a fine piece of her mind. I'd hate to be a relative of hers. That grim mouth and those close-together eyes always go with a narrow mind—cold blue eyes, enough to make one shiver!"

Entered a third woman, who proved to be the friend that both elder and younger were awaiting. The newcomer swept into the parlor with an air of exuberance.

"This is the great surprise I have long planned!" she cried ecstatically. "You both have repeatedly expressed such admiration for each other."

The speaker took the elder by the hand and addressed the younger:

"Edith, this is Mrs. Grand, the author and lecturer on such daring sex problems. You have said she was the greatest woman thinker on earth. Mrs. Grand is to speak next month before a congress of leading eugenists in Stockholm.

"And you've enthused so often about Edith Pendleton," continued the glib introducer, turning to the elder. "She's just back from her archæological exploration in Egypt. Exhumed several new—or old—Pharaohs, I believe, and she's just been given some sort of extraordinary medal or order. She's devoting all her time and fortune to those musty tombs. Think of it, Mrs. Grand!"

The elder and the younger were equally nonplused. They somehow stammered through the ceremony of introduction. An expression each saw in the other's eyes caused them to draw together and kiss.

"I have so appreciated your knowledge of human nature," said Miss Pendleton to Mrs. Grand.

"Why, your interpretation of the motives and characters of those ancient Egyptian kings has been what has amazed and delighted me," answered Mrs. Grand.

Thereupon, all three went in to tea.

D. E. WHEELER.



"Who is she?"  
Heth breathed.

# The Fire of Spring

By Leigh Gordon Giltner

Author of "The Sport of Chance," "The Alibi," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MARSHALL FRANTZ

**Oh, the madness of youth! But, fortunately, one word turned the affair for Shelley Heth. And it became almost a comedy!**

**I**T was a strange infatuation. Yet not altogether that—if one considered Marcella. For Marcella was unique; of a quality so exceptional, that ordinary standards failed to apply. Though she was quite twelve years young Heth's senior, the spirit of imperishable youth clung, like a fragrance, about her. Age had not withered her—her masseuse was invaluable—and custom certainly had not staled her infinite variety.

Despite her thirty-eight years—her detractors gave her the benefit of an additional two—Marcella Hallam was cypress slender and sapling straight and lithe; thanks to her coiffeur's subtle

alchemy, her hair kept its burnished gold; her beryl brown eyes retained their youthful brilliance; she had the vividness of a tropic flower, and her vivacity was unflagging. It was indeed her contagious enthusiasm which made her so much in demand; she was always ready for anything; always sparkingly gay; always—as divers harassed hostesses were gratefully cognizant—to be depended upon to scintillate. She was consistently the "life of any party."

Living always on the surface, possessing no deeper emotions to speak of, having never experienced any particular care or sorrow, Marcella retained

all the freshness and beauty of youth. Her face was unlined, her step fairy-light, and she motored and danced and golfed as blithely as the young girls she chaperoned—with a delightfully liberal construction of the duty.

Her beauty had instantly caught the eye, and intrigued the interest of Lieutenant Shelley Heth, poet and dreamer, despite his creditable war record. He was new to Lewiston and thus unaware of her institutional quality, for it amounted to that. Mrs. Bourke Marston Hallam was distinctly the leader of the small city's social activities and a certain rather incongruous and unexpected executive ability made her a power in club and civic work as well; it was as instinctive with her to lead as for others to follow.

The town felt a certain pride in her as a local product, which had a wider than local potency and prestige, and celebrated shamelessly her beauty, gifts, and graces. All of these charms so wrought upon Heth's impressionable heart, that within two seconds after his glance first fell upon her, he had succumbed to her spell. He could not, at first, be made to realize that Marcella was a matron and that the tall, good-looking youth seen with her far oftener than her husband was *her son*. But even when, perforce, convinced of this rather jarring fact, the illusion held.

A Red Cross benefit was the occasion of his first glimpse of her. It was an outdoor affair; but even in the candid glare of strong afternoon sunlight, Marcella, who posed as a dryad, was as lovely as any wood nymph who ever roamed in Arcady.

So thought Heth, who sat and gazed raptly at her until the man seated next to him caught it—and grinned. He too, had experienced that siren lure.

"Who is she?" Heth breathed, without taking his eyes from the lithe figure, in palest green, which seemed to drift across the sylvan stage.

Gibson followed the tense gaze.

"That?" he drawled, "Oh, that's Mrs. Hallam, our Mrs. Hallam. Regular *Venus Annodomini*—if you know your Kipling."

Heth shot an indignant glance at him.

"Absurd!" he snapped. "Why, she's youth incarnate. She can't be twenty!"

"Plus eighteen, she admits," smiled Gibson, "though I fancy it's rather more than that. But, as she herself will tell you, she married very young."

"You're a rude iconoclast, Hugh!"

"I'm a plain grouch," laughed the other, "the fair Marcella threw me—hard. Want to meet her, after the show?"

Mrs. Bourke Marston Hallam had exchanged her dryad's costume for a modish street gown and hat when Heth was presently introduced. But even in the light of Gibson's unflattering revelation, she did not look half the years ascribed to her. Her complexion was flawless, exquisitely delicate and fine of texture; her golden hair seemed to catch and hold the sunlight; her figure was as *svelte* as that of the pretty girl beside her, the reputed fiancée of young Chadwick Hallam.

"You must come and have tea with me some afternoon, lieutenant," Mrs. Hallam said at parting; and Heth hastened to avail himself of the privilege.

That was the beginning. Heth was just lately back from overseas. Despite his æstheticism, he had endured the unspeakable horrors of the trenches with fortitude, and had served so efficiently as to surprise those of his acquaintances who thought of him as a dreamer and dilettante. His poems of service, he found on his return to the States, had made him a name; and he had, thus encouraged, ventured upon a larger field. In the intervals of his not too arduous duties as local representative of his father's firm, he had written half a dozen somewhat blunt and crude, but strong and vital stories



of the life he had known over there; and to his own surprise had sold them. As he worked rapidly, under the stimulus of young enthusiasm, he had a larger leisure than the majority of other men, which afforded him the more opportunity to devote himself to Marcella Hallam. This he did with an assiduity which amazed even Marcella herself, who might have been considered beyond being surprised at the vagaries of her admirers.

The youth made no conscious effort to analyze his feeling for Mrs. Hallam. He knew only that he had found the fulfilment of his visions, the realization of his somewhat vague ideal. His devotion was largely idealistic, almost impersonal in a sense, and wholly reverent and worshipful. But the crass, general world is not given to subtle distinctions and discriminations, and deification and flirtation come to much the same thing in the popular esteem. So people talked. Her own set guardedly referred to "Marcella's rather indiscreet encouragement of Lieutenant Heth's attentions;" the proletariat, less conservative, indulged in pretty definite discussion.

It was Bourke Hallam's closest friend—a fact which probably saved him from annihilation—who ventured to broach the subject to the apparently unsuspecting husband, urging him to "speak to Marcella," as if—Hallam smiled in spite of himself at the thought—anything he or any one else might say would influence that charming autocrat.

"People are talking you know, Bourke," Cowles appended apologetically.

"Let 'em," answered Hallam serenely. "Always have talked; always will. So why worry?"

"But you don't understand, old chap," Cowles persisted. "This is different. Of course there's always been an undercurrent of criticism of Marcella, due to jealousy of course, but mostly harmless

chatter. But this— Really, Bourke, I feel you should know what they are saying."

Hallam rose, deliberately lighted a cigar and leaned against the mantel looking down at his friend, truly his friend. Otherwise the discussion would have ended at its outset.

"I don't think I care to know, Louis," he said quietly, "it doesn't interest me in the least. If Marcy, a middle-aged woman and the mother of a married son"—the recent announcement of Chadwick Hallam's secret marriage of some months previous, had given Heth a momentary jolt—"cares to play around with this young cub of a poet, she's welcome. I should think he'd bore her stiff, but that's up to her. Surely you've seen, old man, how things stand, and have stood for years between Marcy and me?"

Cowles shook his head.

"Then I don't mind telling you, Louis, that Marcy means just about as much to me as that bronze Diana on the pedestal there. I was crazy enough about her when we were married, and I think she cared as much for me as she's capable of caring for any one—she's not exactly ardent, you know. It was all very perfect for a while; I was a model husband and Marcy a charming wife; Chad was a cherub, and we made a pretty *genre* picture—happy family group and all that. Then somehow everything went a bit stale. The flame burned low. Domesticity began to bore me. I found it had been boring Marcella for some time. So we had a showdown, and a new deal."

"I'm afraid I don't quite follow. You mean—?"

"Simply that we agreed to drop pretense and live our lives as we liked. Neither of us was keen on divorce. Marcy suited me perfectly in many respects; she made a charming mistress for my home; she was good looking, gifted, and clever, always in the lime-



"Don't answer now, boy.  
Think it over, and make  
your own decision."

light, always decorative, and the sort one could be proud of. And I could give her the wealth and prestige she wanted. So I suggested that we just run along as before, with the domestic-bliss stuff omitted. Marcy was to have a perfectly free hand—and so was I. I'd sufficient confidence in her good taste to be sure that she'd never go too far and I don't think she cared greatly whether I did or not, so long as I remained discreet. That's the arrangement, Louis, and we've found it a pretty satisfactory one for years."

"But now," urged Cowles rather anxiously, "don't you realize that there just might be breakers ahead? Marcella's

nearing what some one has called 'the dangerous age.' She probably feels that youth is slipping away from her—though upon my soul she doesn't look it!—and she's likely to grasp at straws. It means a lot, they say, to a woman to realize that she's capable of inspiring admiration and affection. That, I'm told, is incense to her nostrils; and when the flame begins to flicker and run low and she feels herself no longer an object of desire, one of two things happens."

"For example?" Bourke Hallam queried, faintly amused.

"Either she gives up the struggle, stops tinting her hair and complexion

and goes in for good works or the 'Alice-sit-by-the-fire' stuff; or——"

"Or——" prompted Hallam.

"Or she does something desperate or foolish—it's practically the same thing. That's why so many middle-aged women—with apologies to Marcella—'middle-aged' doesn't seem exactly the phrase to apply to her—run away with their chauffeurs or mix themselves up in messy scandals of one kind or another."

"You don't mean," Hallam's tone was quiet, "that you think, Marcella——"

"I don't think so, Bourke, but I honestly don't know. I confess I'm not an expert in feminine temperament. This may be just one of Marcella's harmless little 'affairs,' or it may be something more. But I'd advise you to—well, not to take things too much for granted."

Hallam looked thoughtful for an instant; then, fingering a letter in his pocket—a letter just received from Chad, he grinned slowly.

"Suppose," he suggested, "suppose we just await developments?"

Marcella Hallam was, as has been stated, an institution in Lewiston. She was such a social power, and she so dominated her immediate circle of acquaintance, that petty jealousy dared not openly manifest itself. Marcella was—Marcella, and it would have been regarded as *lesé majesté* to question anything she might say or do. "The queen can do no wrong," was the creed of her followers. But the proletariat exchanged knowing glances, as her flirtation with Shelley Heth progressed.

They were always together. He haunted her footsteps; her lightest glance seemed to thrill him like heady wine. He was obsessed, possessed by her; he threw reason to the winds, and hung about her with a devotion so obvious that even those who had felt her power marveled a little.

Then somehow Heth, senior, heard. He came on at once—a fine, upstanding,

strong-featured man of fifty-odd, who looked the capable man of affairs he was.

He had tact of a sort, had the elder Heth, and he wisely refrained from even adumbrating the object of his visit till an opportune moment, having first accounted for his presence in Lewiston by offering Shelley a more important and far more lucrative position with the firm's Western branch in Frisco. But late that evening when they sat smoking companionably in Shelley's room, the father said, as casually as possible:

"I've been hearing things, boy, and I——"

Instantly, Shelley was on the defensive. The father saw it and answered the unworded protest.

"I haven't come here to pry or to preach, Shelley. I'm not a saint myself; I never set up for one. And I'm not going to read you a lecture of any great length. But there are just a few things I'd like to say, if you'll listen; then I'll ring off, and let you think them over."

"Of course I'll listen, father," Shelley said rather sullenly, "but I'm afraid it won't be much use."

The other man glanced at him keenly; then he spoke quite simply:

"I'm not underrating what you feel, son, or depreciating the fight I know you've put up. I only want to remind you that you've made your mother very proud of you and that it would be rather a pity to take from her the recompense for all she endured while you were overseas."

Shelley gulped.

"Don't, father," he begged. "That's quite beside the question. You don't understand."

Heth, senior, smiled slowly.

"Maybe I do, son. I've lived something more than fifty years, you know. And we all have our particular fights to make at one time or another. But

what I especially want to suggest is that you're riding to a fall, and that whichever way you head, there's a bad smash in store for you. There's no 'happy issue' out of such an affair."

"Happiness," said the youth reflectively, "is a matter of individual taste. It's happiness for me just to love her, even hopelessly, to worship her, to suffer for her—if you get what I mean."

"I think I do, Shelley. But everything's relative. We have to pay for whatever we get in this world. Even such a modified happiness as yours has its price, and it may prove a pretty high one, unless you do your suffering at a safe distance. Shouldn't you say that a woman's good name and a young man's reputation for straightness and decency were too much to pay for a mighty barren sort of bliss? Just figure it out for yourself, boy. She isn't free; even if she were, in a legal sense, there's another tie that binds her. She has, I'm told, a son—married son. I should say she owed him and his something."

Shelley flushed. The existence of Chad Hallam was one of the flaws in his fabric of dreams.

"I don't think I'd considered that," he faltered.

"Well, it's something to think about. Another thing—we must look at this from every standpoint, you know—I don't know how far things have gone or what your plans and hopes may be. But in the matter of material things, now. I understand the lady has everything the world thinks worth while, a magnificent home, position, social prestige, wealth, and all the rest of it. Suppose she were willing to sacrifice all this for you? What could you give her? Your four years overseas broke into your career; you're just about where you were when you left college. You've had some success with your pen, but not enough to count on definitely. Do you think you'd be playing fair to ask her to give up what she has, for

what you *haven't*?" He rose. "Don't answer now, boy. Think it over, and make your own decision. My offer of the Western branch position holds. Don't turn it down till you've worked things out in your mind. Good night, my son. I don't think we need speak of this matter again."

The mere memory of his mother had more than once been potent to arrest Shelley Heth's straying footsteps at the very edge of the brink; but the mention of her name, for once, failed utterly to sway him. He was not himself; he was as one possessed—not of a devil but of a radiant spirit, too potent to resist. He was mad about Marcella Hallam. He could not reason; he could only feel.

Lewiston was an insignificant little city, but quite disproportionately patriotic. She had done not her bit, but her best, during the years of conflict; she had Red-Crossed and War-Worked to the limit; had gone over the top in the several Liberty Loans and was now boosting the Victory Loan with all her effort. Marcella Hallam, as was her wont, was head and front of it all. She was county chairman, and the most active worker in the field.

So, when the Allied Flying Circus was announced to appear spectacularly in Lewiston, in the interest of the Loan, Marcella was the first to volunteer to go up in one of the planes. She was not blind to the advertising value of the announcement of the flight, which she herself gave to the local papers. But it struck a chill to the heart of Shelley Heth. He knew enough of flying to be aware that it is not yet an exact science, and that the conquest of the air is not quite complete. However skilled the pilot, there are liabilities to accident which have not as yet been reduced to a minimum. He had seen a close comrade fall to his death; had beheld countless planes brought down in flames, or



"Mrs. Hallam—Marcella!" he cried in anguish. "Say you won't go—I beg of you not to!"

sent crashing to earth in cataclysmic wreck and chaos, and that Marcella should venture on the treacherous air lanes, filled him with a terror that made him physically ill. He hastened to remonstrate. But Marcella only laughed.

"You risked your life for your country, my dear boy," she reminded him. "Why should you deny me the same privilege?"

"But—that's a different thing," the boy almost sobbed. "This isn't a necessity; the other was. And you'll be risking not only your own life—but another. For life without you——" He hadn't meant to say it; it seemed to say itself. Marcella laughed again.

"Sounds like a 'leader' in the films."

"Mrs. Hallam—Marcella!" he cried in anguish. "Say you won't go—I beg of you not to. Promise!"

Marcella lightly brushed his protest aside.

"Dear boy," she yawned behind her pretty hand, "if you knew me better, you'd understand how useless it is to argue with me, once my mind's made up. Ask Bourke. He's tried it."

The fortnight that ensued left Shelley Heth white and limp. Tortured by carking fear he had gone about like a pale ghost, a restless shadow that hung in Marcella Hallam's wake. He had had his baptism of fire in the flaming hell of the front-line trenches, and his courage had not failed; but he quaked for Marcella's peril as he had never done for his own.

With a sick heart he read the flamboyant posters and advertisements of the forthcoming event. Marcella's name was conspicuously featured. Somehow he could not visualize her safe return from the flight; always he pictured the downward dive, the fatal drop. He finally dimly sensed that he must somehow pull up; that way lay madness.

As Heth sat brooding miserably the night before the flight, a messenger brought him a note. It was one of the few with which Marcella had favored him—she was not epistolary, as a rule.

He opened it with a shaking hand. It was her farewell; at the last she had thought of him. For an instant Marcella's bold script blurred before his vision; then he managed somehow to read:

You'll be relieved, dear boy, to learn that I'm not going up to-morrow—or later. I've just had the surprise of my life—haven't had time as yet to decide whether or not it's a pleasant one.

Chad wires that I've a wee namesake, who made her bow this morning. Of course, it would scarcely be becoming for a *grand-mother* to attempt anything spectacular; besides, I confess I'm a bit anxious to see what the young lady who bears my name is like, and I don't care to take any chances. So the flight's off as far as I'm concerned.

We're entertaining all the "aces" informally at dinner to-morrow evening. You'll join us, of course? As ever, M.

The missive fell from Shelley's lax fingers and slipped unheeded to the floor. It was a case of shell shock. One word—but it had changed the face of things. He had been able to regard Marcella's existing domestic relations without revulsion. But *this!* It seemed to label her, fatally and finally. In lieu of its anticipated tragic conclusion, the affair had ended in sheer comedy—and love can survive anything except a sense of its own absurdity. His inner ear was hearing not a requiem but a mocking humoresque. Just one word—but it made all the difference. Its inclusions had left him cold. He was barely twenty-five, and Marcella was—he couldn't say it.

Half an hour later Mrs. Hallam was struggling with his hasty scrawl:

I'm sure, dear lady, that your many other friends will be as delighted as I am to learn that you've given up your flight. The risk was too great, and I congratulate you, both on your decision and its occasion.

As I'm leaving by the midnight express to take charge of our firm's Western branch, I fear I shan't see you again. So I shall take this opportunity to say good-by, and express my gratitude for your manifold kindness, which I shall never cease to remember.

With assurances of lasting regard, I am always, faithfully your friend,

SHELLEY HETH.





# The Love Line

By H. de Vere Stacpoole

Author of "The Beach of Dreams,"

"The Man Who Lost Himself," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT EINSTEIN

A story of two men and two women.



THERE'S a thing not marked on any map," said Tyrebuck, "and that's the Love Line. North of forty-five degrees people don't know anything about love—no more than they do about mangoes. I mean the real thing, the thing that makes folks dig knives into one another and poison their rivals. North of forty-five degrees Cupid goes about with cold feet, in a Burberry, with an account book. South of it he goes about naked with a dagger."

James Mason got up and fetched down an atlas. His rooms at Prince's were furnished quietly but with an eye

for effect and with excellent taste, which he had full liberty to indulge.

Old Peter Mason supplied the money. He made it out of esparto grass and paper mills. He regarded Cambridge as a sort of mill for the manufacture of gentlemen and didn't bother about the expense nor about degrees. James would have plenty of money. He was a good-looking boy with a level head and the gift of speech, and when Cambridge had finished with him he would marry well and go into Parliament, maybe. He did not know that his level-headed son had engaged himself to marry a tobacconist's daughter in the

Petty Cury, a rather good-looking, but rather bilious-looking girl, older than himself and with an impossible father. And he had done this in his second year and no one knew, not even his closest friends.

That was the worst point about James; he had done the business like an old hand in folly, and with the craft and precision of legerdemain and with the secrecy of a sharper, yet his intentions were as honorable as the promises of Mr. Bradbury, and his passion for Jane Hogg as genuine as the passion of Romeo for Juliet.

It was the vision of Jane that made him contest Tyrebeck's dictum.

"Venice is north of forty-five degrees," said he, looking up from the atlas.

"And Venice is a sewer," said Tyrebeck, "and cold as charity in winter—and gondolas and guitars and the lies of poets aren't what I was meaning. You must go south, my boy, to find out—travel."

"I will some day," said Mason, little dreaming how near that day was to him, "but at the same time, and with all due deference, I believe you are talking through your hat. Daggers and devilish southern tempers don't spell love, any more than gondolas and guitars and the lies of poets. Give me a straightforward English girl, be she ever so humble——"

Then Count Janis strolled in with a couple of other men. Cards were produced and Tyrebeck, who had no taste for gambling, took his departure.

Janis was an "out-coll" man, one of the foreign brigade, an Austrian nobleman with rooms in Hill Street and a big pile of debts. At cards, when he lost, which was seldom, he gave checks on the *Crédit Lyonnais*. He was reckoned wealthy, but the university already had its eye on him.

He had developed the gambling instinct in Mason. It was another bad

point about James that, though he was credited with the taste for a game of cards, no one suspected the big sums he had lost, or the extent to which this disease had laid hold upon him; and another point not altogether rosy was the size of his wine bills contrasted with his almost untarnished reputation for sobriety. He scored by rarely cutting chapel, by holding aloof from rags and bonfires and such frivolities, by his manner, at once self-respecting and respectful when confronted with authority, and by the quietness of his staircase. When the junior tutor was kept awake of nights by the uproar from Huntingdon's rooms above and such choruses as:

"Then up I came with my little lot  
And the air went blue for miles"

he could not but contrast it with the peace of Mason's rooms below, where, nevertheless, the brandy was quietly going in its rounds and the cards being dealt.

Then, one night, about a fortnight after Tyrebeck's discourse on latitude forty-five degrees, the smash came.

## II.

It was eleven o'clock, a full moon was shining on the quad and peace reigned over Prince's. Huntingdon was out or asleep, and the junior tutor was in bed reading Joseph Hocking.

Suddenly, from the rooms below, came sounds of uproar. Now these sounds, coming from the rooms above, would have been natural; coming from the rooms below they were suggestive of fire or catastrophe of some sort.

The junior tutor, seizing a dressing gown, descended, wrapped as in a toga, knocked at Mason's door, received no answer and entered.

Mason, Janis, a man named Lomax, and a Pi man by name of Fairbanks were disclosed, standing and fronting Marcus Leaf of Peter's, a pallid-faced



"Here's your place," said Logan, stopping before a doorway in a blank wall.

pseudo-gentile, son of old Moses Leaf, the carpet manufacturer.

And Leaf was shouting, "Four hundred pounds you've got out of me in the last week, may I die if you haven't—and the cards marked—marked, so help me! Swindlers!"

This in a haze of cigarette smoke, cards, brandy bottles, counters and money on the board, and the Pi man not improving matters by an attempt to get under the table.

The junior tutor was a man with a big under jaw. He had been captain of the school at Bradley and he could tolerate Huntingdon's gayety and condone rags—but this!

Janis he knew, and Lomax he knew, and Fairbanks he suspected—but Mason! He swooped, collected the cards, heard Leaf's story and duly presented it next morning in the council chamber of the president's lodge, where Mason was arraigned before the president, the bursar, and the dean.

And the curious thing was that though Mason was innocent of swindling, Lomax and Janis being the real criminals, the greater fury of the storm fell on him. He couldn't quite clear himself, and his excellent past became an accuser. He had been leading a "hidden life." He certainly had, as far as Miss Hogg and cards and brandy were concerned, but when he looked back as he did that evening, seated alone in his rooms and waiting for the verdict of the authorities, it seemed to him that he had concealed nothing and that he was the innocent victim of other men's faults, the sport of fate and the football of the gods.

In a way this was so, for that week old Peter Mason had incurred large money losses over a speculation in wood pulp, and the telegram that brought him to Cambridge brought him primed like a gun.

He put up at the Bull, received the sentence of the university on James—

rustication only, as the marked cards were proved to be the personal property of Janis—and had an interview with the president of Prince's. Then, like a business man, he went into accounts and the terrible pile of bills unpaid. The tradesmen had got wind of the mischief.

"Is this all?" Peter had asked of his son when he had examined the last bill. "Yes," James had said, "that's all, I believe."

Yet an hour later a tradesman arrived in person, who had been sent on from Prince's to the Bull and who bore in his hand a bill for sixty-five pounds, fifty for a lady's gold wrist watch and fifteen for a lady's brooch.

Then a scene ensued, the incommunicative James suddenly disclosing a concealed manhood and a temper on all fours with Peter's.

"Who is the hussy?" demanded Peter. "Don't dare to answer me, sir; don't dare to excuse your conduct. Who is the hussy?"

"The hussy, as you call her, is the girl I'm going to marry," replied the other, "and her father is a tradesman, if you want to know more, and as good as you or me. What are we but tradesmen?"

He left the room without waiting for a reply, left the hotel, and walked off down Trumpington Street. He felt elated with that false elation which comes from alcohol or sudden release from mind strain. He had cut free from everything and fate could do no more—so he thought—and there was nothing left to be discovered. For the last six months he had always feared the discovery of Jane Hogg by his father, and time and again the faint prompting had come to him to make a clean breast and tell the old man of the engagement, knowing full well that the storm which would arise over Jane, produced openly, would be nothing to the hurricane over Jane accidentally dis-

covered. He had even thought of marrying her and producing her married. But Jane, when the thing was suggested to her, absolutely refused. She was not going to be married in any hole-and-corner fashion, but married like a lady; openly or not at all. Hers was, no doubt, the type of love referred to by Tyrebuck when he spoke of a Burberry and an account book. Well, he had produced her openly at last, the worst was over. He would marry her openly.

In his frenetic state of mind he scarcely remembered his financial position and leaving Trumpington Street he made for the Petty Cury.

Five minutes later he was in the Hogg back parlor, fronting Jane across a table adorned with a flower vase placed on a Berlin wool mat, and Jane, pale and with red-rimmed eyes, was saying, "What *have* you been doing?" The Hoggs had heard. The bedders and college servants of Prince's had spread the news in a distorted fashion, and old Hogg, a well-to-do and sensible man who had never approved of his daughter flying higher than her fellows, had been "rubbing it in" all the morning.

"It wasn't my fault," said James.

He explained so clearly and with such evident honesty that she believed. Janis had let him in for this, she saw that clearly enough, but the strange thing was she seemed to feel no anger against Janis and no commiseration for James.

"Does your father know?" asked she.

"He's here," replied James, "and I've told him about you!"

"And what did he say?"

James was dumb, but his speechlessness was eloquent.

It was then that old Hogg entered.

The funny thing was that James owed the old man over twenty pounds for cigars. He had forgotten this debt.

"I want to have a word with you, Mr. Mason," said Hogg.

He was quite respectful, but firm. It didn't do any good girls marrying above their station; he had always said that; he had seen it over and over again.

"Nonsense," said James. "You are just as good as we are."

Well, maybe—but what about Mason's family, how did he stand with his father and what would his father say to the idea of his marrying Jane?

It was here that Jane cut in with the information that James' father was staying at the Bull.

"Then I'll go and see him," said Hogg. "I'll go right now."

"No," said James hurriedly, "you mustn't do that."

"Then," said Hogg, "it's all off between you and Jane—and I'll ask you to take your leave and not see her again." He suddenly waxed warm. "And it's not only that. I've heard of what's been doing at Prince's. I don't blame nobody, but there it is. I must ask you to take your leave and not see her again."

"Jane, how is it to be?" asked Mason, turning to her.

Jane broke into tears and ran from the room.

"You've broke her heart," said Hogg. "but that's better than ruining her life — I tell you straight I don't want to have no more truck with you, neither me nor she. I was always against it."

Five minutes later James found himself in the street, feeling like a man who had fallen downstairs. That night, having borrowed some money from Tyrebuck, he started for London. Arrived there he took rooms, and lost no time in writing a long letter to Jane. It was promptly returned by Hogg. Then a fortnight later, finding the situation impossible, he made peace with his father, and these were the terms of peace as dictated by Peter:

"You have had your chance and thrown it away and disgraced yourself. I'll have no more of Cambridge,

but I'll make you an offer. The Tangye Company want a man to handle their work at Sarafax. The business is easy and any fool can do it, but it's a post of responsibility. You can talk French and that's the main thing. If you go there for a year and make good, then I'll see what I can do for you. If you don't, then I disown you! I give you five minutes to make up your mind!"

"I'll go," said James wearily. "I can't do anything else."



He glanced up and saw a hand on the gallery rail suddenly withdrawn, and heard a faint laugh.

### III.

Mail boats don't run to Sarafax, only freighters to unload Manchester goods

and hardware and other products of the west, and to take on esparto grass and great bales of dates and hammered copperware and carpets. There is no harbor, the cargo being taken ashore and brought off in boats manned by plum-colored men, half naked, and with eyes screwed up against the blaze of the blue Mediterranean.

Mason took passage on the *Thirlwall*, a seven-hundred-ton Black Star boat with a rust-red funnel. The sight of her lying in Cardiff docks with the hatches open and the cargo winches roaring nearly drove him back to London.

Once at sea, however, he began to forget things and to pick up his spirits. The bay was a flat calm and Gibraltar stood guard of a blue summer sea that seemed to deepen in color each day. They passed Oran and Algiers and Tunis, and left the lights of Tripoli behind them under a night of stars, till, one afternoon, the pounding of the propeller ceased and the anchor fell, while the *Thirlwall* swung to the current off a heat-hazy coast where the date palms showed above the sea shimmer and the shore line of creamy foam.

Amid the date palms a giant seemed to have emptied a box of dice and above the cubes, all huddled together, showed the minarets of a mosque.

That was Sarafax.

Shore boats were pulling out and among the others a boat in whose stern sheets sat a man dressed in white drill



and wearing a sun helmet. This was Logan, agent of the Nipal Date Company which had also an interest in tobacco, madder, and castor oil.

Logan was a pale-faced man with, habitually, a cigarette between his fingers. He spotted Mason at once.

"You the new man for the Esparto people?" asked Logan.

"Yes," said Mason.

"Well, I'll take you ashore with me," said the other. "Ringwell, the man whose job you're taking, couldn't come off, he's dicky—I said I'd look after you. Wait a mo', I have two cases of whisky on this hooker and I must clear them."

Then, when the whisky and Mason's luggage had been lowered, Mason said good-by to the captain and officers of the *Thirlwall*, and followed the other into the boat.

Logan held the yoke lines and in a tongue foreign to Mason gave directions to the rowers.

"You'll soon pick up the lingo," said he, "and you've got an interpreter for the business till you do. Ringwell will be all right to-morrow and able to 'put you wise,' as the Yankees say, before the *Thirlwall* starts. He's due to go by her, but she'll be lying here another three days. Liver, that's what he's got. Liverish place, Sarafax."

They were coming in, now, toward the sheeting foam, and he half stood up as he gave his directions to the rowers. The boat hung for a moment, then seizing her chance she came on a glass-green roller and was seized and rushed beyond wave reach by the waiting Arabs.

The sands off Sarafax seem an outcrop of the desert that lies behind the town, the same color, the same desolation; they are mournful, despite the sun blaze and the blueness and noise of the sea, and on days of perfect calm when the sea just lips them they are more mournful still.

Logan, followed by porters carrying his cases and Mason's luggage, led the way.

The old town wall has long gone to ruin but the part near the sea gate still stands, almost as it stood in the days of Barbarossa.

They passed the gate and entered a street, and to Mason it seemed that the gate had closed behind him shutting out the West forever. For this was a street of the Arabian Nights, less a street than a bazaar, squalid, brilliant in the afternoon sun, colored with the colors of the East and completed by a line of camels stringing in through the desert gate from the limitless, mysterious country beyond. A street without a pane of glass, a street without house windows, a street of dazzling light and hat-black shadows, a street where a thousand blazing years have baked the color of the sun into tile and brick and to which the caravans had brought their goods in the time of the Sultan Selim, camel after camel, with bales of goods and bearded merchants, brothers and images of the traffickers of to-day.

They passed along through a crowd where the Levantine, the Spaniard, and the Greek mixed with the Arab and the Jew, a crowd topped with the turban and the fez, scented with garlic and Oriental tobacco and original dirt, all blending and mixing with the wind of the desert and the perfume of camels.

"Here's your place," said Logan, stopping before a doorway in a blank wall. "Ringwell has got a room for you and when he goes you can have his apartments. An old chap called Succi owns the house; he's a cigarette maker, got a booth down the street and rolls cigarettes all day—but he's rich. Wait a minute."

He sent the porters with his cases to the house where he lived and then they entered the house of Succi, a porter following with Mason's luggage.

The house of Succi like all the houses

in Sarafax, had an inner court upon which all the rooms opened and a terrace on top which gave a view of the desert and the sea. The place seemed as desolate as a barn and Ringwell's rooms, when they reached them by going up a flight of stone stairs, struck a chill into the heart of Mason.

Colored prints torn from *La Gaudriole* and Spanish illustrated papers and stuck upon the walls were the only artistic adornment. Old steamboat deck chairs, native mats and brass-work, and a table laden with tattered books and empty cigar boxes, the furniture.

Ringwell was lying on his bed in the room that served as his bedroom. He was a man of forty or thereabouts, used up by four years of Sarafax, sun, and sirocco.

#### IV.

Ringwell three days later departed with the *Thirlwall*, and Mason found himself alone to face the world and make good in a town where lying is a virtue, robbery a trade, and assassination by poisoned knife or coffee mixed with finely chopped hair, an art—one of those passionate arts that flourish only in the sun.

Having been "put wise" to the tricks of the Esparto trade by Ringwell, he managed to hold his own in business. During the first few weeks, getting a grip of things and fitting himself to this new environment, time passed quickly. Then came the reaction. When the novelty had worn away, the reality of life in Sarafax began to appear before him in all its truth. This strange, new-colored environment was unsympathetic to his mind and antagonistic to most of his desires and opinions. The mornings were bearable; the evenings, passed mostly with Logan and the two other Englishmen who lived in Sarafax, endurable, but the afternoons were terrible. He tried to

sleep in the afternoons, but he knew not the art of the siesta. His mind was too active; and after half an hour of semi-drowsiness he would rise from the bed and go out into the street, or seek the roof terrace where there was generally a breeze. From here one caught a glimpse of the dun desert to the south and to the north a glimpse of the Mediterranean, now polished like a glittering shield in the flat calms, now like a tray of smashed sapphires under the breeze, while, between the desert and the sea and all around, the rooftops of Sarafax lay in the baking sunlight girdled by the changeless palms.

To complete all things would come the voice of the muezzin from the minaret of the marabout-haunted mosque: "Allah il Allah—God is Great."

Clear sometimes, sometimes dimmed and half blown away by the breeze.

When they did not meet at the Café Abesslem, Logan would come to his rooms and they would drink gin and smoke and yarn; and Mason, when sometimes half fuddled, would talk of "that girl." He had told Logan the story of Jane Hogg. He kept her photograph and letters in an old biscuit tin to protect them from the black ants, and one night he showed them to Logan. He was no longer really in love with Jane, and in his right mind he rarely thought of her. It was only when he had taken a few glasses of gin—the gin they sell in long stone bottles at Gibraltar and the Mediterranean ports—that her image returned to him. Logan was not interested, though he pretended to be. Logan had only three interests outside his business: whisky, cards, and love-making. It was not long before he got Mason on to cards and after a while it became a common occurrence for Mason to take a hand at a game in the back premises of the Café Abesslem. Logan, Abesslem, the proprietor, a gentleman with a beard of burned-up black, and the two other Englishmen in Sara-

fax formed the rest of the circle.

Logan was bad. Loneliness had attached him to Mason and was the real bond that united them. But despite loneliness and the desire for company with another of his color and kind, Mason recognized the fact that Logan was bad and a man to be avoided, recognized the fact without acting on it. He had not stamina enough to stand apart, to work out this trial trip that old Peter Mason had imposed on him, alone. So he for-  
gathered with Logan in the house of Abesslem, and drank with him in the house of Succi, and discovered one day that Logan came to see him very often not on his, Mason's, account, but on account of Giovanna Succi, the daughter of his landlord.

Now this girl was a most astonishing figure, quite unique, even in that town of strange figures, Sarafax. She was beautiful. Born of a Spanish mother and an Italian father her beauty was a blend of the characteristics of each race. Her dress was fantastical, almost a little mad, yet perfectly completing her strangeness, from the brooch that held her robe at the bosom to the horn-handled dagger stuck in her belt.

Mason had often passed her coming in or going out, yet he had never saluted her. She held herself quite apart from the lodgers of the house as though she were ashamed of the fact that old



When he tried to kiss her she drew back, and her hand went toward the hilt of the little dagger that was not worn for ornament alone.

Succi let apartments, yet she knew Logan. Logan had repeatedly tried to make love to her. He might just as well have tried his attractions on the Sphinx. With an intuitive knowledge of men she despised him, yet she never repulsed him, accepting him as one of her numerous admirers, nothing more.

She made lace for amusement as well as profit, and in her spare time she would spend hours in wandering alone on the sands. The sea fascinated her and though the sands of Sarafax have danger spots where underlying springs make them unsafe, she walked free of danger, her knowledge of the place and

her quick eye protecting her, just as her dagger and her knowledge of the dangers of Sarafax protected her in the town.

Mason, while admiring her, never dreamed of admiring her as a girl. She seemed a being not only of another race, but of another century, and there was something about her that almost repelled him. This vague repulsion came, perhaps, not from herself so much as from her attire, so *outré* and bizarre. The little dagger, the silver bangles on her arms, the brilliancy of her robe; all seemed to him stagy. Correctness still clung to him as well as the Englishman's horror of things not quite correct, and thus it came about that while Giovanna never spoke to him, he never wished to speak to Giovanna.

Did she find this out by instinct, and was her pride touched by the fact that she, who had only to whistle to be followed by every man in Sarafax, was, yet, an object of no interest to the stranger? Or was it his good looks? No one can say, but the fact remains that one day in passing she turned on him the blaze of her eyes.

Mason was just entering the house when this thing took place; he was depressed by losses at cards on the night before and by the heat of the day, but, as he went up to his rooms, cards and everything else were forgotten, forgotten as completely as they would have been had he stepped into one of those quicksands on the beach.

That night in the Café Abesslem, in the back room where a Sudanese boy served absinth with sirup of gum and colored, sticky drinks, and where Abesslem with a Minghetti cigar between his thick lips dealt the cards, Mason, in splendid good spirits, played high and—won.

He had got himself into very low water, but the winnings of that night recouped him in part. It was almost

as though the dark gaze of the woman had brought him luck.

Next day she passed him without a glance. For two days he did not see her. Then one day, as he was lighting a cigarette in the inner court, a rose fell from the gallery above right at his feet. He glanced up and saw a hand on the gallery rail suddenly withdrawn and heard a faint laugh. Then he ran up the stairs.

That was the beginning of his love affair with Giovanna Succi.

But do not for a moment imagine that he had it all his own way and that Giovanna's rose was the ambassador from a conquered city. He had caught her fancy, nothing more, and when that day in the gallery he had tried to kiss her, she drew back and her hand went toward the hilt of the little dagger that was not worn for ornament alone.

Giovanna was not the woman to have a lover, and though old Succi spent his days in rolling cigarettes and his evenings in counting up his money, and though he frankly let lodgings, he and his daughter held themselves high, disdained the Levantines and the Jews and the Tripolitans, and looked upon the Arabs as dust beneath their feet.

There are primitive and most curious social circles in Sarafax, and there are no shades of morality. There is only morality, pure and simple, or abomination. Love with Giovanna meant marriage, and this fact was very presently engraved upon the mind of Mason, as was also the fact that to carry on a flirtation with this strange being would be a business fraught with danger. But these considerations and forecasts had no power to deter him. He was in the grasp of elemental passions stronger than the powers of mind, and of an art old as life and exercised unconsciously by the medium that had him under control.

She evaded him; sometimes for days

he would not see her, then he would meet her and she would give him a flower or a glance or a few words—she spoke French—and perhaps the next time she would pass him with scarcely a word, as though he had in some way insulted her.

His mind was in a perpetual ferment. He told Logan, he showed Logan a flower she had given him, and Logan, to whom she had never given even a word of encouragement, looked at the flower and laughed. Laughter with Logan was never an indication of joy.

So it went on till one night on the terrace of the house, under a sickle moon, Mason coming up for a breath of air found Giovanna gazing at the half-seen sea. They spoke for awhile of indifferent things and then there was a silence, and then, without a word, she was in his arms, and for the first time he knew what life meant as he held her with the wind of the desert blowing her hair across his face.

Ah, that night! And the night that followed when they met again on the lonely terrace, with only the moon and the stars to watch them swearing eternal love, swearing one to the other that neither had ever loved before, making plans for the future, vague as the plans of children, clasped together as though by the warm arms of the night.

And then, next day, meeting her in the inner court, she flung something in his face, spat a word of hatred at him, and vanished.

He picked up what she had thrown at him. It was the bundle of letters and the photograph of his first love.

When his reason returned to him as he sat, ten minutes later in the Café Abesslem, before a marble-topped table and a glass of absinth, he came on the idea that it was she who had found these letters secreted in the tin box in his room. She must have entered his rooms and searched about; there was no one else possible. The old Arab

woman who cleaned the place, and brought him his coffee was his friend. He had done her many a kindness and she knew nothing of his love affairs. No, there was no single person who could have done this thing but Giovanna—and she had a reason, a low-down reason. She wished to pry into the affairs and past life of the man she loved. This thought, this knowledge—for he looked on the thing as assured—almost destroyed his passion for her by half turning it against her. It was the measure of his power for real love that he failed to refuse the idea as monstrous and to seek elsewhere for a solution. Then he might have thought of Logan, Logan who, in fact, had done this thing under the whip of drink and thwarted passion. He had taken the letters from Mason's room, presenting them to Giovanna and affirming that he had picked them up in the courtyard. Each letter was in its original envelope with Mason's name upon it, and Giovanna knew enough English to understand what each letter meant. There were twenty and they covered twenty weeks—and he had sworn that he had never loved another woman.

As Mason sat sipping his absinth Logan entered the café, looking white and shaky. Logan had a profound and intuitive knowledge of women. Some men are like that. Perhaps they have been women themselves in some recent, previous incarnation. When he had given Giovanna the letters that morning his head had been still full of the fumes of last night's alcohol, yet clear enough to be able to reckon what Giovanna would probably do. She had done it.

His first glance at Mason told him that. He sat down at the same table, called for an *apéritif* and Mason brought out his story.

Logan, with his ten and sixpenny Panama on the back of his head, listened. He did not inwardly exult; the



One day, leaving the sea gate for the sands, she passed Logan and in passing she gave him a glance.



affair, accomplished, seemed pretty flat. She had fired Mason, but that did not bring her any closer to him, Logan, and now that Mason was fired, jealousy no longer existed, though ready enough to spring to life again if she were to relent.

They had dinner together at the café and Mason unconsciously took his revenge on Logan by boring him to death with his talk.

Then, in the back room with the cards on the table, Mason, to avenge himself on Giovanna, played high and lost—lost more than he could afford to pay. He returned home under the moon that was now more than a sickle and, stumbling up the stairs, threw himself on his bed.

He did not see Giovanna next day and the following night he played again heavily, and lost and paid his losses. But he paid them with the money of the Tangye Company, money due for bills and wages, money that was not his own.

He awoke next morning to this fact. Two thousand seven hundred francs was the amount he had had in hand yesterday afternoon and every centime had belonged to the Tangye Company. His salary was not due for another three weeks and that week-end he would have to pay over a thousand francs to meet business engagements and wages. He had lost nineteen hundred francs. There were left eight hundred. He could not meet the week-end engagements. The bills were overdue and there could be no extension of credit, and the wages were imperative. He had three courses open to him, suicide, another try for luck at the cards, or flight. He could get away, perhaps, on one of the trading ships lying at anchor off the shore, or he might get along the coast, disguised, and reach Alexandria. With eight hundred francs he could do a lot.

If he tried a last cast with luck at

the cards, he might lose everything and then escape would be impossible. On the other hand he might gain enough to save himself.

Suicide he quite ruled out.

All that day he fought out the question in his mind, luck calling him to try once again, fear warning him of the consequences. Early in the morning he had drawn the balance to his credit from the *Crédit Lyonnais* and he had it in his pocket in gold ready to throw it into either gamble. He lunched at the café with Logan who, noticing his curious manner, put it down to the affair with Giovanna. As a matter of fact Giovanna and all things about her were of little concern to Mason now, with prison his major consideration and his mind oscillating between methods of escape.

After luncheon he went and sat on the old town wall in a corner of shadow, with the desert before him shaking in the sunshine and stretching away and away south, east, and west. It was here, sitting alone, that self-pity seized him. It seemed to him that his past held nothing but one long conspiracy conducted by viewless powers against himself. What had he done wrong with the exception of this last act, which was less an act of his than an act of madness, owing to his treatment by Giovanna? Nothing. At Cambridge he had had no hand in the marking of those cards; he had played for money, but lots of other men did the same; he had fallen in love with a girl beneath him socially, but his love had been honest and honorable; he had never wronged a single person—yet now he had come to this. Why?

He reasoned it out with himself, or tried to. It was not his fault. Whose, then? It was the fault of circumstance and the women. But for the business of Jane coming on top of the gambling affair, old Peter would not have exiled him to Sarafax. But for Giovanna he

would not have destroyed himself by play at the Café Abesslem. There were parallelisms between his Cambridge life and his life here that seemed to mark distinctly the hand of fate—cards in both places had helped in his undoing, and as though fate were not above a grim bit of humor, the woman in each case was the daughter of a tobacco seller.

When evening came on, he returned to the Café Abesslem and dined; then he left the place and walked down the street toward the desert gate.

It was now that the battle between the two alternatives, cards or flight, really began. To play hard and high and risk everything to gain everything, or to slink away defeated but still with eight hundred francs to help him in escape.

To lose was to be absolutely cut off and ruined; to win was to be saved. His fingers clutching and turning over the gold pieces in his pockets seemed endowed with thought. They kept telling him: "These, these alone can save you." And again: "Without these you are destroyed."

At the desert gate the wind told him that even now the card table was set and that time had suddenly become a factor in the business. Then, all of a sudden, as though the wind of the desert had brought him strength, he came to the grand and heroic determination. He would chance everything on the cards, make one bold bid for life and freedom. With the decision, it seemed suddenly revealed to him that all his failures and his present situation were due to the fact that he had never yet acted on his own determination and initiative; he had always been a marionette worked by pleasant things and other people's wills; he had always chosen the easiest course.

Well, this was not an easy course. The idea of this tragic gamble was hateful to him, yet he determined to en-

gage in it, fling the gauntlet in the face of fate and stand or fall by the result.

He turned and came back along the street, thronged, now, with the evening crowd. As he drew near the Café Abesslem he increased his pace. As he drew closer, his fingers tightened on the gold pieces in his pockets. He clutched them as a man clutches a life buoy, his will or what seemed his will crying to him: "Cast your life buoy away and swim to your salvation; it's your only real chance, your only real chance."

Yet, at the supreme moment, he couldn't.

He hesitated at the doors of the Café Abesslem and passed on.

He reached the sea gate and passed through it; reached the sands, those dangerous sands where even Giovanna would have been wary in the light of a half moon. He had three days before settling day at the end of the week, and the hunt would not be after him till then, so he reckoned, and in three days he would be amidst the crowds of Alexandria, where, as a stoker on board a ship, he could get safely away.

He struck east, leaving Sarafax forever.

## V.

It was not till noon next day that Giovanna learned of Mason's disappearance. The old Arab woman told her that he had not slept in his room, also that she had seen him last evening walking away from the sea gate toward the sands.

Giovanna was a creature of intuition. A shiver ran through her at the words of the old woman. Still passionately in love with Mason, despite the rage of jealousy, the idea that some ill had befallen him paralyzed her heart. She went up to his room.

Mason had torn the letters and photographs across and thrown the fragments into a brass bowl standing on the floor.

She saw them, picked them up, and examined them. Then she threw them back into the bowl. She knew, now, that the other woman was of no account to him and, jealousy banished, she stood gazing about the empty room and thinking. He loved her. He had been driven to despair by her action. He was dead. These were her thoughts. He had left Sarafax last night, and wandering about distracted on the beach, had been swallowed in one of those quicksands ever ready for the unwary. There was no other explanation of his failure to return. He was dead. She knew it. And her action had killed him.

She stared dry eyed at the fact. Then she left the room, and leaving the house took her way through the sea gate to the sands.

There was no ship in the anchorage to-day. The ships that had been here yesterday had put out at dawn, and the sands east and west lay desolate, flown over by gulls, and trembling beneath the warmth of the sun.

It was here that the vision of Logan came to her, the man who had inspired her to strike the man she loved. Logan had done this thing, really, and he had done it to spite the man who had been his friend. Logan and Mason had always been together, and the perfidy of Logan stood like a nimbus around his act. She had not seen it before; jealousy had blinded her.

She walked toward the east, for it was toward the east that the danger places were worst. She noticed them. Any of these might be the grave of her lover. Even in daylight they might have taken him, let alone vague moonlight, for they were all but indistinguishable to any but her eyes and the



He was dead.  
She knew it.  
And her action had  
killed him.

eyes of the Arabs and the few fishermen who used the place, nothing but a slight change of color marking the spots where underground springs made the sand treacherous as liquid mud.

Mason did not return that night and next morning Giovanna again sought the sands, the sea wind blowing her black hair and pleating her crimson robe. It was the dress she had worn on the day when she flung the letters in his face. It was hateful to her; that is perhaps why she wore it. She came here as if to walk with the ghost of her dead lover. She rarely spoke now with the townspeople, yet, all the same, rumors came to her that he had left the company's debts unpaid and that he had lost all his money at cards at the Café Abesslem just before his disappearance. These rumors did not disturb her faith in his love for her; they increased it. He had gone wrong because of her, because of her treatment



She drew closer. Nothing now remained but the head and arms, the head thrown back like the head of a man luxuriating in a bath.

of him, because of Logan. Logan had led him to play. He was one of the Café Abesslem crowd.

One day, leaving the sea gate for the sands, she passed Logan and in passing she gave him a glance.

He stopped dead, paused for a moment and then turned and followed her.

The anchorage was empty of ships to-day, the sands were deserted, and the sea came creaming in, showing a long line of foam, white as the gulls blowing about under the sapphire of the sky.

She seemed, without turning her head, to know that she was followed, for she increased her pace so that when Logan, his heart leaping in him, drew up to her, they were a mile away, beyond view of eyes from the town that lay in the burning distance—alone with the gulls, the wind and the sun.

The rumor of the waves and the perfume of the sea filled the air. To the right lay the desert with its stone outcrop and its vast spaces of sand, a few

lone trees, and far away, small as flies, a line of camels passing east along the old caravan road that leads from Kas-saba Zargha to Alexandria.

As he came close he called to her and she turned her head. Then he joined her and they walked together.

It was the first time he had got her alone, away from every one. He fancied that the affair with Mason had left her ready for his advances, out of pique, if for no other reason, and that burning glance she had given him had disturbed his mentality like absinth.

He was silent at first and then when he began to talk his voice trembled like the voice of a nervous girl. As he grew bolder the hot words came ringing and full of passion. He had loved her for more than a year. She must have known it. He was ready to die for her. His dream was to live for her and work for her—he was due to leave Sarafax in six months—her eyes followed him waking and in sleep.

She listened, looking over the sands where Mason had met his doom, drawn to it by two women and by himself.

Then as they walked she picked up two shells, one purple, one pale.

"They will tell me if you speak the truth," said Giovanna. "It is the Arab way. By which you will bring me back, I will know whether what you say is from the heart or men's lies."

She cast the shells, one after the other, far across the sands. She had chosen her spot.

Logan laughed. He knew that Arab idea of the pale shell and the purple shell chosen in the dark, and he knew that the purple shell was the lucky one. He imagined that she thought him ignorant of the fact, else she would not have given him the choice in daylight. He exulted in the idea that luck had dealt him such a good card and he determined to pause as if undecided as to his choice when he reached the shells.

He did not know that she had thrown them over the bottomless pit.

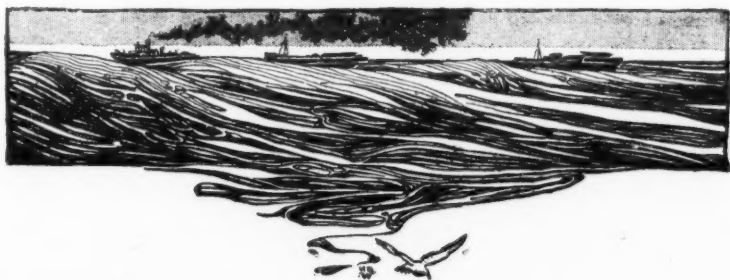
He started running, and as he ran, suddenly he stumbled as a man stumbles whose foot is caught in the kink of a carpet, and carried forward by the impetus he was suddenly engulfed to the knees. He turned with a violent effort to reach back to firm ground and the effort sunk him to mid-thigh.

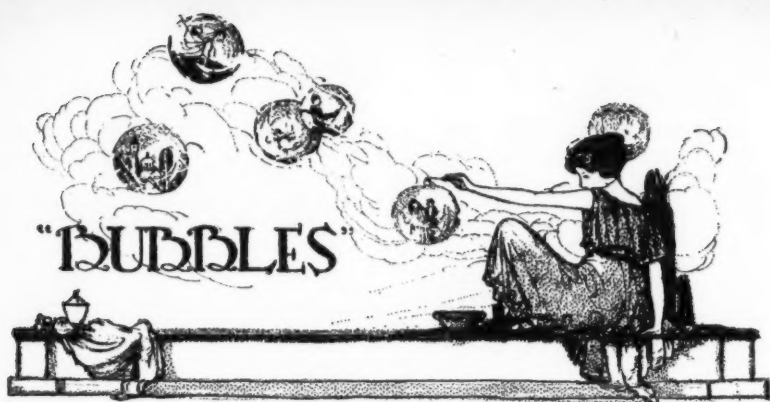
She stood watching, motionless as a figure of bronze. She saw his arms cast out toward her and heard his cries. A down-swooping sea gull passed over him and he clutched at it though it was yards and yards above his head. And now the sand had taken him to the arm-pits. He no longer cried out.

She drew closer. Nothing now remained but the head and arms, the head thrown back like the head of a man luxuriating in a bath. The liquid sand poured into the open mouth despite the efforts of the fingers to empty it. Then the sand covered the eyes and hair. Nothing was left now but the hands, almost black. They vanished, mysteriously drawn from sight.

The far-off camels on the old caravan road seemed scarcely to have altered their position, and beyond the quicksand, now smooth and traceless, like emblems of the two women, lay the shells that had formed the lure, one purple, one pale.

I saw Giovanna only last year in Sarafax, and it is an index of the character of Sarafax that her story, even to the end of Logan, is public property and had gained for her public respect. Jane Hogg you may see any day in the Petty Cury. She is respected, also, but in a different way.





Love is a merry-round of pleasure, but marriage is a square dance.

Few people care to remember boy-and-girl love affairs—the woman because it reminds her of her age and the man because he wants to forget what a fool he was.

A man may be capable of loving two women at a time and yet too wise to undertake it.

A good reputation is as desirable as a pair of overshoes. A man can never know when he may want to use it.

The reception of the story of a woman's life depends largely upon the beauty of the woman telling it.

From the time "Freddy" learns to walk, the average family has a private detective always on the job.

When I am dreaming of you, I'd like to be a Rip Van Winkle.

Thinking of the right excuse at the right time makes marriage a success.

Some women look upon matrimony as a Garden of Eden and others as an experiment station.

Every man is a slave to him to whom he tells his secrets.

Loving the person you can't marry makes saints. Marrying the person you can't love is responsible for devils.

A man who dares kick a dead lion may still fear a live dog.





# WHAT THE STARS SAY

by Madame Renée Lonquille

Would you know yourself—your character, your disposition, your traits, your lucky days? Would you know some of the things that are likely to happen to you in the future? If so, you will be interested in following each month Madame Lonquille's articles on Astrology. The series began in the March number, with the sign of Aquarius.

## SCORPIO

**B**ETWEEN October 23rd and November 21st of any year, the Sun passes through the constellation or group of stars known as Scorpio, the eighth sign of the Zodiac, fixed and watery. The planet Mars is its ruler. People born at this time are often very handsome, well set up physically, of middle size but strong and robust. Their faces are somewhat large and square. Their necks are usually thick and short. These natives are often troubled with some defect in the legs or feet. They are very thoughtful and reserved, but as active and deceiving as the scorpion. They are extremely discreet and cautious with the thought always present in their minds of doing the thing most approved of in polite society. They guide their own actions according to public opinion, and attempt to do the same with relatives and friends. Should they step aside from the straight and narrow path no one will be the wiser, for they are capable of assuming a dignified manner that never fails to make a wonderfully good impression. The secretive faculty of which these people are masters often succeeds in covering all or many faults they may possess.

Often people of this sign are very hard to understand. They are extremely reserved by nature and may be relied upon to keep any secrets entrusted to them. The developed types are full of pluck, determination, and self-control with a marvelous store of vitality which helps them to make use of these good qualities, making them wonderfully strong characters and very forceful individuals. They are fully aware of their powers and often devote their lives to helping humanity and the world at large. They love approval, however, but do not work for that alone. A little encouragement goes a long way to help the natives of Scorpio over difficulties in life. Often they have many rules and regulations made for themselves, to which they try to make their relatives and friends conform. But their remarkable qualities of deep attachments will make them forget these strict regulations if not approved of by those whom they love. Scorpio is an occult sign. All those coming under its influence have a deep love of things mystical and sometimes a very psychic nature. They are capable of doing much good work, for their keen judgments, shrewdness, and

tenacity of purpose help them along any line they happen to choose.

The undeveloped Scorpio natives are very secretive and cunning. They often show intense jealousy and vindictiveness, fits of rage and passion which leave nothing to the imagination. Such people must have everything their own way, or those around them suffer the consequences. They hold in contempt those of lesser intelligence and make many enemies by their proud, arrogant manners. This sign has more power than most of the other signs; consequently when that force is misdirected, it can work much havoc in the lives of those with whom the persons are associated. They are hard, suspicious, and mistrustful, never giving any one the benefit of a doubt. So tremendous is their force for evil that sometimes they are led to murder or self-destruction. Thus it has been said that the undeveloped Scorpions are devils, while the developed types swing to the other extreme and become angels.

#### DECANATES.

This sign like all others is divided into three periods or decanates consisting of about ten days each, each division accentuating or subduing the general characteristics of the whole sign. The first decanate is between October 21st and the end of the month. All those born in this division make friends more easily than others of the sign, and are apt to form very strong attachments or friendships. They are sensitive and thus influenced greatly by those with whom they come in contact. These types never have much to say, are not confiding, and are often too retiring or shy, even timid, especially while they are young, finding it very hard to mix with strangers. They often change, however, on reaching middle life, gain more self-confidence and overcome their bashful traits.

Those born between November 1st

and 10th enjoy more balance. They are not quite so reserved but are more talkative and friendly. They are not so cautious and discreet. If a promise is made to them, they have utter confidence that it will be fulfilled and are free from most of the suspicious qualities that are very evident in many Scorpions. Thus they are often deceived by friends and associates and suffer in consequence many inconveniences. However, it is hard for them to learn when and where not to place their trust, and they are thus constantly having "eye openers." They are extremely kind by nature and also very hospitable.

The third and last division is between November 10th and 21st. These last types are very determined as well as ambitious and ought to reach greater prosperity in their lives than those of the other divisions, for when they acquire position or money they have more ability to keep it. They work steadily with a firm idea of succeeding. They are much more sociable than other Scorpions and seem to delight in the society of others. They are, however, particular in choosing friends and are devoted to their homes.

#### HEALTH AND DISEASE.

Natives of this sign generally have good, strong constitutions and often a great deal of recuperative power, but strange to say, they suffer often from ill health of a peculiar kind and from uncommon disorders. The ailments are more or less of an inflammatory nature. Rheumatism, gout, and heart troubles frequently are common to these people. They need much rest and quiet to keep healthy. Their surroundings should be peaceable and still. They need no stimulating effects and enjoy life better and do their best work when no excitement prevails.

They should strive to be temperate in everything and learn to save and protect the internal life forces. However,

in petty ailments they are their own best doctors and can prescribe for themselves with very good results. If a doctor is called, these people of Scorpio can help wonderfully to diagnose their own diseases, for they seem to possess intuitive knowledge of the best drugs for disease. Often in cases of slight illness they will give helpful medical suggestions to their friends and relatives, which will prove to be of great value.

#### EMPLOYMENT.

Many medical doctors find their homes in this penetrating, shrewd, magnetic sign. It is said that many of these people know medicine by intuition, and are born healers. Their magnetic personality helps those lacking in vitality, and they prescribe drugs only when really necessary. Their keen, cautious judgments make them clever in diagnosing all ailments. Ordering the correct treatment comes to them as "second nature." They make splendid dentists, chemists, and surgeons, and may be trusted to do the best in these lines of work. They are ambitious and clever, succeeding financially by being able to adapt themselves to all circumstances. People of Scorpio have marvelous ability to extract secrets from others. This quality often makes them very successful in detective work, which for them is a very congenial employment.

#### LOVE, MARRIAGE, AND FRIENDS.

It often falls to the lot of Scorpions to be connected in some way with peculiar and sometimes tragic love affairs. In their love relations they are almost wholly controlled by the passionate nature, but are capable of the most wonderful self-control. They make excellent husbands and wives. Marriage is a very important consideration in the lives of Scorpions. They should always marry, because this helps to develop and

soften their characteristics and often proves beneficial even if they are not always as happy as they had expected to be. If a husband or wife is carefully chosen, the marital troubles of the developed Scorpions will not be many.

They should choose, however, for the greatest happiness those who have the Sun in Cancer, or born between June 21st and July 21st, or any person born in their own sign Scorpio. This holds true with friends also. They might find congenial companionship with those influenced by Capricorn, December 20th to January 21st, or Taurus, April 20th, to May 20th. But let them beware and not expect happiness or harmony if they should marry any one having the sun in Pisces, February 19th to March 20th; Sagittarius, November 22nd to December 20th; or Gemini, May 20th to June 21st, for Scorpions are much too powerful to blend with any of these three last-named signs.

#### CHILDREN.

Children of Scorpio, unlike those of the preceding sign, Libra, need the greatest care and wise attention. Their way is unusually beset with obstacles and pitfalls. Their dispositions, not yet under control, might lead them to rash deeds which would cause them untold suffering later in life. In youth these natives are of very inflammable natures and possessed of very quick tempers. It requires very wise, loving guidance to show these little ones the right road, but they are quick to develop and understand right from wrong. As children, they like to be with those older than themselves. This very often corrects the tendency to be somewhat aggressive. They realize they must give way to the older children's ways. But again this inclination to play with older boys and girls is very apt to cultivate and emphasize the cunning, crafty traits much in evidence when very young, as these are naturally the de-

fense which weaker ones must always possess in association with stronger individuals.

With all their little shortcomings, they are exceedingly bright, clever pupils and are often at the heads of their classes in many subjects. Even if they do need a great deal of attention and often cause much worry and anxiety to their parents and teachers, the Scorpio children always have their lessons prepared. These children should be kept from all forms of excitement. Even in correcting them, one should talk in a soft, subdued voice and in an altogether calm manner. Neutral colors should always surround them, and they should have long hours of rest and recreation in the country.

#### PREDICTIONS.

With such an amount of ambition and determination as the natives of Scorpio possess, it is safe to predict success in life along any line they may happen to choose, but this prosperity will probably not come to them until in mature years. The first part of life is troubled and often unsettled. Gains are sure to come to them later, perhaps in connection with some religious work or as the result of a long journey. An inheritance is also more than probable around middle life.

They are not likely to have many brothers, if any. One brother is in danger of a serious fall or perhaps of drowning. The natives themselves run great risks of fevers contracted in distant countries. Some peculiar form of headache is predicted, as well as a few severe attacks of neuralgia at certain periods of their lives. These natives will probably survive their husbands or wives. In the first part of life Scorpions might lose some very dear friend or relative, which event will change the course of their lives. Journeys are predicted for Scorpio people, but there will not be much benefit through them.

Friends in plenty are foretold and they will be of real meaning and help, but one benefactor or friend will cause much sorrow and distress, a delay in prosperity or perhaps in a love affair. There will be enemies found in business and in social life, but their power for harm cannot hurt the Scorpions. Let these subjects beware when traveling in foreign countries, because there are indications of attempts at robbery. These might simply prove uncomfortable and nothing more, as the sign Scorpio protects its natives from very serious harm.

In choosing a day for a journey, for starting some new enterprise, or making any change whatever, let the Scorpions choose Tuesday as the luckiest day of the week for them. Their colors are deep reds and crimsons.

#### Answers to Correspondents.

Mrs. L. G.—Born November 18th, 1878, 1.15 p. m., Plainwell, Mich. You were born with the planet Saturn rising in Pisces. Few maps of life contain as many aspects as yours. In disposition you are reserved and thoughtful, being firm and obstinate in your opinions, but adhere strongly to your attachments. You have a sharp, turbulent wit and wonderful ability if you turn it to good account. The Moon in conjunction with Uranus in the house of marriage has much effect on your married life and shows the husband to be very fond of the opposite sex. The Sun in good aspect to Saturn augurs a marriage late in life or to an elderly, morose person. Many removals and changes from place to place are sure to occur. If your hour of birth is correct, a very important event in your life happened when you were about twenty-one years of age, which you will no doubt recognize. This would help to rectify your chart. The Moon by her secondary motion makes a sextile with Venus in your forty-first year of age, which may bring you needed assistance and help from a female friend. In your forty-second year, the Moon comes into conjunction with Saturn, and you should guard your health, over this very depressed period, and try to keep your mind busy on cheerful subjects until this aspect passes. This direction might cause the death of an elderly relative or Saturnine person.



# Simon

By J. Storer Clouston

Author of "The Man from the Clouds," "The Spy in Black," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

**If you like mystery, murder, and intrigue, you will want to read this new serial, so subtly woven that not the most discerning will anticipate its dénouement. The story will run through four numbers of SMITH'S.**

## CHAPTER I.

### THE SOLITARY PASSENGER.

THE train had come a long journey and the afternoon was wearing on. The passenger in the last third-class compartment but one, looking out of the window somberly and intently, saw nothing now but desolate brown hills and a winding lonely river, very northern-looking under the autumnal sky. He was alone in the carriage, and if any one had happened to study his movements during the interminable journey, he would have concluded that for some reason he seemed to have a singularly strong inclination for solitude.

When the train at length paused in the midst of the moorlands—and for some obscure reason this spot was selected for the examination of tickets—another feature of this traveler's character became apparent. He had no ticket, he confessed, but named the last station as his place of boarding the train, and the next as his destination. Being an entirely respectable-looking person, his statement was accepted, and he slipped the change for half a crown into his pocket, just as he had done a number of times previously, in the

course of his journey. Evidently the passenger was of an economical as well as of a secretive disposition.

As the light began to fade, and he could see by his watch that their distant goal was now within an hour's journey, the man showed, for the first time, signs of a livelier interest. He peered out keenly into the dusk, as though recognizing old landmarks, and now and then he shifted in his seat, restlessly and a little nervously.

He was a man of middle age or upward, of middle height, and thickset. He wore a muffler, so drawn up as partially to conceal the lower part of his face. A black felt hat was drawn down over his eyes. Between them could be seen only the gleam of his eyes, the tip of his nose, and the stiff hairs of a grizzled mustache.

When they stopped at the last station or two, the reserved and exclusive disposition of this traveler became still more apparent. Not only was he so muffled up as to make recognition by an unwelcome acquaintance exceedingly difficult, but so long as they paused at the stations, he sat with his face resting on his hand, and when they moved on again, an air of some relief was apparent.

But a still more remarkable instance of this sensitive passion for privacy appeared when the train stopped at the ticket platform just outside its final destination. Even as they were slowing down, he fell on his knees and then stretched himself at full length on the floor, so that when the door was flung open for an instant, the compartment was to all appearances empty. Only when they were well under way again did this retiring traveler emerge from beneath the seat.

And when he did emerge, his conduct continued to be of a piece with this curious performance. He glanced out of the window for an instant at the lights of the platform ahead, and at the groups under them, and at the arch of the station roof against the night sky. Then swiftly he stepped across the carriage and gently opened the door on the wrong side. By the time the train was fairly at rest, the door had been as quietly closed again and the man was picking his way over the sleepers in the darkness, past the guard's van and away from the station and publicity. Certainly he had succeeded in achieving a singularly economical and private journey.

For a few minutes he continued to walk back along the line, and then after a wary look all around him, he sprang up the low bank at the side, threw his leg over a wire fence, and with infinite care began to make his way across a stubble field. As he approached the wall on the further side of the field, his precautions increased. He listened intently, crouched down once or twice, and when at last he reached the wall, he peered over it very carefully before he mounted and dropped on the other side.

"Well," he murmured, "I'm here, by Jove, at last!"

He was standing now in a road on the outskirts of the town. On the one hand, it led into a dim expanse of dark-

ened country; on the other, the lights of the town twinkled. Across the road, a few villas stood back amidst trees, with gates opening on to a footpath. The outlying houses of the town and the first lamp-post stood a little way down this path. The man crossed the road and turned townward, walking slowly and apparently at his ease. What seemed to interest him now was not his own need for privacy, but the houses and gates he was passing. At one open gate he half paused, then seemed to spy something ahead that altered his plans. Under a lamp-post a figure appeared to be lingering, and at the sight of this, the man drew his hat still more closely over his face, and moved on.

As he drew near the lamp the forms of two youths became manifest, apparently loitering there idly. The man kept his eyes on the ground, passed them at a brisk walk, and went on his way into the town.

"Damn them!" he muttered.

This incident seemed to have deranged his plans a little, for his movements during the next half hour were so purposeless as to suggest that he was merely consuming time. Down one street and up another he walked.

Even seen in the light of the infrequent lamps and the rays from thinly blinded windows, it was evidently but a small country town of a hard, gray-stone, northern type. The ends of certain lanes seemed to open into the empty country itself, and one could hear the regular cadence of waves hard by upon a shore.

"It doesn't seem to have changed much," said the man to himself.

He worked his way round, like one quite familiar with the route he followed, till at length he drew near the same quiet country road whence he had started. Nobody seemed now to be within the rays of the lamps, or to be moving in the darkness between. He



went on warily till he had come nearly to the same open gate where he had paused before. There fell upon his ears the sound of steps behind him and he stopped again and looked sharply over his shoulder.

Somebody was following, but at a little distance off. After hesitating for an instant he turned swiftly and stealthily through the gates. A short drive of some pretensions ran between trees and then curved round toward the house. There was no lodge or any sign of a possible watcher, and the man advanced for a few yards swiftly and confidently enough. Then he stopped abruptly. Under the shade of the trees, the drive was pitch dark, but footsteps and voices were certainly coming from the house. In an instant he had vanished into the belt of plantation along one side of the drive.

The footsteps and voices ceased, then the steps began again, timidly at first and then hurriedly. Light shone brightly from the fanlight over the front door of the house, and less distinctly from one window upstairs, and through the slats of a blind in a downstairs room. For a moment he looked in that direction and then intently watched the drive.

The footsteps by this time were almost on the run. The vague forms of two women passed swiftly, and dimly he could see their faces turned toward him as they hurried by. They passed through the gates and were gone, and then a minute later men's voices in the road cried out a greeting. And after that the silence fell profound.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PROCURATOR FISCAL.

At 8:30, as usual, the procurator fiscal entered his severely upholstered dining room for breakfast. The windows of the room looked into a spacious garden with a belt of trees leading up

to the house from the gate, and this morning Mr. Rattar, a machine for habit, departed in one trifling particular from his invariable routine. Instead of sitting straight down to the business of breakfasting, he stood for a minute or two at the window, gazing into the garden, and then very thoughtfully he came to the table.

No man in that northern county was better known or more widely respected than Mr. Simon Rattar. In person, he was a thickset man of middle height and late middle age, with cold, steady eyes and grizzled hair. His clean-shaven face was chiefly remarkable for the hardness of his tight-shut mouth, and the obstinacy of the chin beneath it. Professionally, he was lawyer to several of the larger landowners and factor on their estates, and lawyer and adviser also to many other people in various stations in life. Officially, he was procurator fiscal for the county, the setter-in-motion of all criminal processes, and generalissimo, so to speak, of the police. One way and another, he had the reputation of being a very comfortably well-off gentleman, indeed.

As for his abilities, they were undeniably considerable, of the hard, cautious, never-caught-asleep order; and his taciturn manner and way of drinking in everything said to him added immensely to his reputation for profound wisdom. People were able to quote few definite opinions uttered by "Silent Simon," but any that could be quoted were shrewdness itself.

He was a bachelor. Indeed, it was difficult for the most fanciful to imagine Silent Simon married. Even in his youth he had not been attracted by the other sex, and his own qualities certainly did not attract them. Not that there was a word to be said seriously against him. Hard and shrewd though he was, his respectability was extreme, and his observance of the con-

ventions scrupulous to a fault. He was an elder of the kirk, a nonsmoker, an abstemious drinker, and, indeed, in all respects he trod that sober path that leads to a semipublic funeral and a vast block of granite in the parish kirk-yard.

He had acquired his substantial villa and large garden by a very shrewd bargain a number of years ago, and he lived there with the comfort that his condition in life enjoined, but with not a suspicion of display beyond it. He kept a staff of two competent and respectable girls, just enough to run a house of that size. His life, in short, was ordered to the very best advantage possible.

Enthusiastic devotion to such an extremely exemplary gentleman was a little difficult, but in his present housemaid, Mary MacLean, he had a girl with a strong Highland strain of fidelity to a master, and an instinctive devotion to his interests. She was a soft-voiced, anxious-looking young woman, almost pretty, and of a quiet and modest demeanor.

Soon after her master had begun breakfast, Mary entered the dining room with an apologetic air, but a conscientious eye.

"Begging your pardon sir," she began, "but I thought I ought to tell you that when cook and me was going out to the concert last night we thought we saw *something* in the drive."

Mr. Rattar looked up at her sharply and fixed his cold eyes on her steadily for a moment, never saying a word. It was exactly his ordinary habit, and she had thought she was used to it by now, yet this morning she felt oddly disconcerted. Then it struck her that perhaps it was the red cut on his chin that gave her this curious feeling. Silent Simon's hand was as steady as a rock, and she never remembered his having cut himself shaving before, certainly not as badly as this.

"Saw 'something'?" he repeated gruffly. "What do you mean?"

"It looked like a man, sir, and it seemed to move into the trees almost as quick as we saw it!"

"Tuts!" muttered Simon.

"But there was two friends of ours meeting us in the road," she hurried on, "and they saw a man going in at the gate!"

Her master seemed a little more impressed.

"Indeed?" said he.

"So I thought it was my duty to tell you, sir."

"Quite right," said he.

"For I felt sure it couldn't just be a gentleman coming to see you, sir, or he wouldn't have gone into the trees."

"Of course not," he agreed briefly.

"Nobody came to see me."

Mary looked at him doubtfully and hesitated for a moment.

"Didn't you even hear anything, sir?" she asked in a lower voice.

Her master's quick glance made her jump.

"Why?" he demanded.

"Because, sir, I found footprints in the gravel this morning—where it's soft with the rain, sir, just under the library window."

Mr. Rattar looked hard first at her and then at his plate. For several seconds he answered nothing, and then he said, "I did hear some one." There was something both in his voice and in his eye as he said this, that was not quite like the usual Simon Rattar. Mary began to feel a sympathetic thrill.

"Did you look out of the window, sir?" she asked in a hushed voice.

Her master nodded and pursed his lips.

"But you didn't see him, sir?"

"No," said he.

"Who could it have been, sir?"

"I have been wondering," he said. Then he threw a sudden glance at her that made her hurry for the door. It

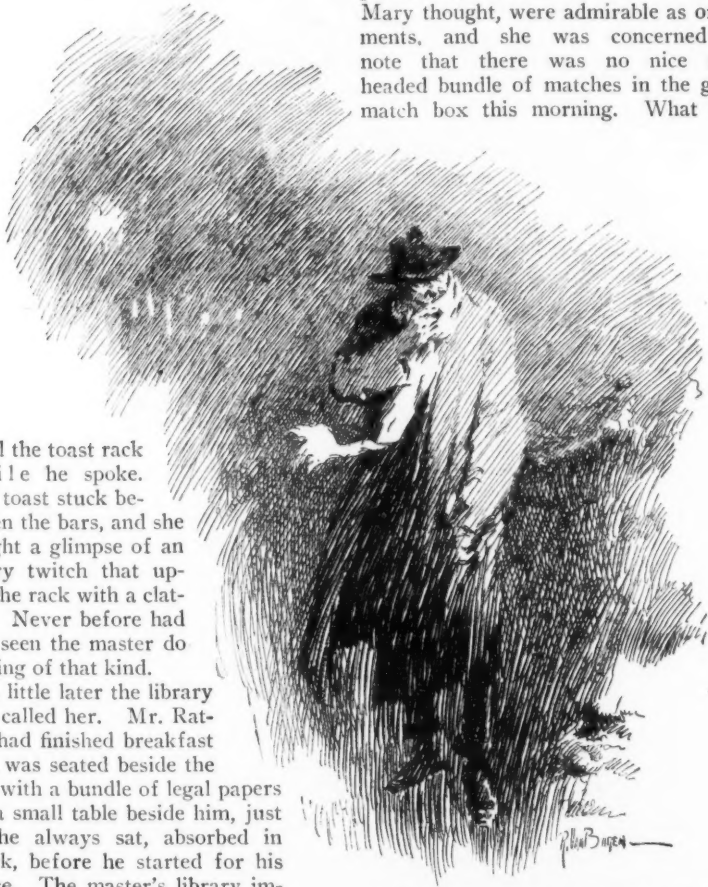
was not that it was an angry look, but that it was what she called so "queer-like."

Just as she went out, she noted another queerlike circumstance. Mr. Rattar had stretched out his hand to-

place, no sign even of pipe, tobacco jar, cigarette, or cigar. The only concessions to the vices were the ornate ash tray and the massive globular glass match box on the square table in the middle of the room, and they were manifestly placed there for visitors. Even they, Mary thought, were admirable as ornaments, and she was concerned to note that there was no nice red-headed bundle of matches in the glass match box this morning. What had

ward the toast rack while he spoke. The toast stuck between the bars, and she caught a glimpse of an angry twitch that upset the rack with a clatter. Never before had she seen the master do a thing of that kind.

A little later the library bell called her. Mr. Rattar had finished breakfast and was seated beside the fire with a bundle of legal papers on a small table beside him, just as he always sat, absorbed in work, before he started for his office. The master's library impressed Mary vastly. The furniture was so substantial, new-looking, and conspicuous for the shininess of the red morocco chair seats. And it was such a tidy room—no litter of papers or books, nothing ever out of



"Well," he murmured, "I'm here, by Jove, at last!"

become of them she could not imagine.

"I don't want you to go gossiping about this fellow who came into the garden last night," he began.

"Oh no, sir!" said she.

Simon shot her a glance that seemed compounded of doubt and warning.

"As procurator fiscal, it is my business to inquire into such affairs. I'll see to it."

"Oh yes, sir, I know," said she. "It seemed so impudent like of the man coming into the fiscal's garden of all places!"

Simon grunted. It was his characteristic reply when words were not absolutely necessary.

"That's all," said he. "Don't gossip! Remember, if we want to catch the man, the quieter we keep the better."

Mary went out, impressed with the warning, but still more deeply impressed with something else. Gossip with cook of course was not to be counted as gossip in the prohibited sense, and when she returned to the kitchen, she unburdened her Highland heart.

"The master's no' himsel'!" she said, "I tell you, Janet, never have I seen Mr. Rattar look the way he looked at breakfast, nor yet the way he looked in the library!"

Cook was a practical person and apt to be a trifle unsympathetic.

"He couldn'a be bothered with your blattering, most likely!" said she.

"Oh, it wasn't that!" said Mary very seriously. "Just think yoursel' how would you like to be watched through the window at the dead of night as you were sitting in your chair? The master's feared of yon man, Janet!"

Even Janet was a little impressed by her solemnity.

"It must have taken something to make Silent Simon feared!" said she.

Mary's voice fell.

"It's my opinion, the master knows more than he let on to me. The thought that came into my mind when he was talking to me was just—'The man feels he's being watched!'"

"Oh, get along wi' you and your Highland fancies!" said cook, but she said it a little uncomfortably.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE HEIR.

At 9:45 precisely Mr. Rattar arrived at his office. He nodded curtly as usual to his head clerk, Mr. Ison, and went into his room. His letters were always laid out on his desk, and from twenty minutes to half an hour was generally spent by him in running through them. Then he would ring for Mr. Ison and begin to deal with the business of the day. But on this morning the bell went within twelve minutes, as Mr. Ison—a most precise person—noted on the clock.

"Bring the letter book," said Mr. Rattar. "And the business ledger."

"Letter book and business ledger?" repeated Mr. Ison, looking a little surprised. "About this Thomson business——" he continued.

"It can wait."

The lawyer's manner was peremptory, and the clerk fetched the letter book and ledger. These contained, between them, a record of all the recent business of the firm, apart from public business and the affairs of one large estate. What could be the reason for such a comprehensive examination, Mr. Ison could not divine, but Mr. Rattar never gave reasons unless he chose, and the clerk who would venture to ask him was not to be found on the staff of Silent Simon.

In a minute or two the head clerk returned with the books. This time he was wearing his spectacles and his first glance at Mr. Rattar gave him an odd sensation. The lawyer's mouth was as hard set, and his eyes were as steady as ever. Yet something about his expression seemed a little unusual. Some unexpected business had turned up to disturb him, Mr. Ison felt sure; indeed,

this seemed certain from his request for the letter book and ledger. He now noticed also the cut on his chin, a sure sign that something had interrupted the orderly tenor of Simon Rattar's life. Mr. Ison tried to guess whose business could have taken such a turn as to make Silent Simon cut himself with his razor, but though he had many virtues, imagination was not among them and he had to confess that it was fairly beyond James Ison. And yet, curiously enough, his one remark to a fellow clerk was not unlike the comment of the imaginative Mary MacLean.

"The boss has a kin' of unusual look to-day. There was something kin' of suspicious in that eye of his—rather as though he thought some one was watching him."

Mr. Rattar had been busy with the books for some twenty minutes when his head clerk returned.

"Mr. Malcolm Cromarty to see you, sir," he said.

Silent Simon looked at him hard, and it was evident to his clerk that his mind had been extraordinarily absorbed, for he simply repeated in a curious way:

"Mr. *Malcolm* Cromarty?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Ison, and then as even this seemed scarcely to be comprehended, he added, "Sir Reginald's cousin."

"Ah, of course!" said Mr. Rattar. "Well, show him in."

The young man who entered was evidently conscious of being a superior person. From the waviness of his hair and the studied negligence of his tie—heliotrope with a design in old gold—it seemed probable that he had literary or artistic claims to be superior to the herd. And from the deference with which Mr. Ison had pronounced his name and his own slightly condescending manner, it appeared that he felt himself in other respects superior to Mr. Rattar. He was of medium height, slender, and dark-haired. His

features were remarkably regular, and though his face was somewhat small, there could be no doubt that he was extremely good looking, especially to a woman's eye, who would be more apt than a fellow man to condone something a little supercilious in his smile.

The attire of Mr. Malcolm Cromarty was that of the man of fashion dressed for the country, with the single exception of the tie which intimated to the discerning that here was no young man of fashion merely, but of ideas, too. That he had written, or at least was going to write, or else that he painted or was about to paint, was quite manifest. The indications, however, were not sufficiently pronounced to permit one to suspect him of fiddling, or even of being about to fiddle.

This young gentleman's manner was on the surface cheerful and politely condescending. Yet after his first greeting, and when he was seated under Simon's inscrutable eye, there stole into his own a hint of quite another emotion. If ever an eye revealed apprehension, it was Malcolm Cromarty's at that instant.

"Well, Mr. Rattar, here I am again, you see," said he with a little laugh; but it was not quite a spontaneous laugh.

"I see, Mr. Cromarty," said Simon laconically.

"You have been expecting to hear from me before, I suppose," the young man went on, "but the fact is I've had an idea for a story and I've been devilish busy sketching it out."

Simon grunted and gave a little nod. One would say that he was studying his visitor with exceptional attention.

"Ideas come to one at the most inconvenient times," the young author explained with a smile, and yet with a certain hurried utterance not usually associated with smiles. "One just has to shoot the bird when he happens to come over one's head, don't you know. You

can't send in beaters after that kind of fowl, Mr. Rattar. And when he does come out, there you are! You have to make hay while the sun shines."

Again the lawyer nodded, and again he made no remark. The apprehension in his visitor's eye increased, his smile died away, and suddenly he exclaimed:

"For God's sake, Mr. Rattar, say something! I meant honestly to pay you back—I felt sure I could sell that last thing of mine before now, but not a word yet from the editor I sent it to!"

Still there came only a guarded grunt from Simon and the young man went on with increasing agitation.

"You won't give me away to Sir Reginald, will you? He's been damned crusty with me lately about money matters, as it is. If you make me desperate——" He broke off and gazed dramatically into space for a moment, and then less dramatically at his lawyer.

Silent Simon was proverbially cautious, but it seemed to his visitor that his demeanor this morning exceeded all reasonable limits. For nearly a minute he answered absolutely nothing, and then he said very slowly and deliberately:

"I think it would be better, Mr. Cromarty, if you gave me a brief, explicit statement of how you got into this mess."

"Dash it, you know too well——" began Cromarty.

"It would make you realize your own position more clearly," interrupted the lawyer. "You want me to assist you, I take it?"

"Rather—if you will!"

"Well then, please do as I ask you. You had better start at the beginning of your relations with Sir Reginald."

Malcolm Cromarty's face expressed surprise, but the lawyer's was distinctly less severe, and he began readily enough.

"Well, of course, as you know, my

cousin Charles Cromarty died about eighteen months ago, and I became the heir to the baronetcy——" He broke off and asked, "Do you mean you want me to go over all that?"

Simon nodded, and he went on.

"Sir Reginald was devilish good at first—in his own patronizing way; let me stay at Keldale as often and as long as I liked, made me an allowance, and so on; but there was always this fuss about my taking up something a little more conventional than literature. Ha, ha!" The young man laughed in a superior way and then looked apprehensively at the other. "But I suppose you agree with Sir Reginald?"

Simon pursed his lips and then made a noncommittal sound.

"Well, anyhow, he wanted me to be called to the bar or something of that kind, and then there was a fuss about money—his ideas of an allowance are rather old-fashioned, as you know. And then you were good enough to help me with that loan, and—well, that's all, isn't it?"

Mr. Rattar had been listening with extreme attention. He now nodded, and a smile for a moment seemed to light his chilly eyes.

"I see that you quite realize your position, Mr. Cromarty," he said.

"Realize it!" cried the young man. "My God, I'm in a worse hole——" He broke off abruptly.

"Worse than you have admitted to me?" asked Simon quickly, and again with a smile in his eyes.

Malcolm Cromarty hesitated. "Sir Reginald is so damned narrow! If he wants to drive me to the devil—well, let him! But I say, Mr. Rattar, what are you going to do?"

For some moments Simon said nothing. At length he answered.

"I shall not press for repayment at present."

His visitor rose with a sigh of relief, and as he said good-by, his conde-



scending maner returned as readily as it had gone.

"Good morning, and many thanks," said he, and then hesitated for an instant. "You couldn't let me have a very small check, just to be going on with, could you?"

"Not this morning, Mr. Cromarty."

Mr. Cromarty's look of despair returned.

"Well," he said darkly as he strode to the door, "people who treat a man in my position like this are responsible for—er—" The banging of the door left their precise responsibility in doubt.

Simon Rattar gazed after him with an odd expression. It seemed to contain a considerable infusion of complacency. And then he rang for his clerk.

"Get me the Cromarty estate letter book," he commanded.

The book was brought. Then he had about ten minutes to himself before the clerk entered again.

"Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland to see you, sir," he announced.

This announcement seemed to set the lawyer thinking hard. Then in his abrupt way he said:

"Show him in."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE MAN FROM THE WEST.

Mr. Rattar's second visitor was of a different type. Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland stood about six feet two and had nothing artistic in his appearance, being a lean, strapping man in the neighborhood of forty, with a keen, thin, weather-beaten face chiefly remarkable for its straight sharp nose, compressed lips, reddish eyebrows, puckered into a slight habitual frown, and the fact that the keen look of the whole was expressed by only one of his eyes, the other being a good imitation but unmistakably glass. The whole effect of the face, however, was singu-

larly pleasing to the discerning critic. An out-of-door, reckless, humorous, honest personality was stamped on every line of it and on every movement of the man. When he spoke his voice had a marked tinge of the twang of the wild West, that sounded a little oddly on the lips of a country gentleman in these northern parts. He wore an open flannel collar, a shooting coat, well-cut riding breeches and immaculate leather leggings, finished off by a most substantial pair of shooting boots. Unlike Mr. Malcolm Cromarty, he seemed to look upon his visit as expected.

"Good morning, Mr. Rattar," said he, throwing his long form into the clients' chair as he spoke. "Well, I guess you've got some good advice for me this morning."

Simon Rattar was proverbially cautious, but to-day his caution struck his visitor as quite remarkable.

"Um," he grunted. "Advice, Mr. Cromarty? Umph!"

"Don't trouble beating about the bush," said the tall man. "I've been figuring things out myself, and so far as I can see, it comes to this: That loan from Sir Reginald put me straight in the meantime, but I've got to cut down expense all round to keep straight, and I've got to pay him back. Of course you know his way when it's one of the clan he's dealing with. 'My dear Ned, no hurry whatever. If you send my heir a check some day after I'm gone, it will have the added charm of surprise!' Well, that's damned decent, but hardly business! I want to get the whole thing off my chest. Got the statement made up?"

Simon shook his head.

"Very sorry, Mr. Cromarty. Haven't had time yet."

"Hell!" said Mr. Cromarty, though in a cheerful voice, and then added with an engaging smile. "Pardon me, Mr. Rattar. I'm trying to get educated out

of strong language, but, Lord, at my time of life it's not so damned—I mean dashed easy!"

Even Simon Rattar's features relaxed for an instant into a smile.

"And who is educating you?" he inquired.

Mr. Cromarty looked a little surprised.

"Who but the usual lady? Gad, I've told you before of my sister's well-meant efforts. It's a stiff job making a retired cow-puncher into a high-grade laird. However, I can smoke without spitting now, which is a step on the road toward being a Lord Chesterfield."

He smiled humorously, stretched out his long legs and added:

"It's a nuisance your not having that statement ready. When I've got to do business I like pushing it through quick. That's an American habit I don't mean to get rid of, Mr. Rattar."

Mr. Rattar nodded his approval.

"Certainly not," said he.

"I've put down my car," his visitor continued. "Drive a buggy now—beg its pardon, a trap, and a devilish nice little mare I've got in her, too. In fact, there are plenty of consolations for whatever you have to do in this world. I'm sorry only for my sister's sake that I have to draw in my horns a bit. Women like a bit of a splash—at least judging from the comparatively little I know of 'em."

"Miss Cromarty doesn't complain, I hope?"

"Oh, I think she's beginning to see the necessity for reform. You see, when both my civilized elder brothers died——" He broke off, and then added: "But you know the whole story."

"I would—er—like to refresh my memory," said Simon; and there seemed to be a note of interest and almost of eagerness in his voice that appeared to surprise his visitor afresh.

"First time I ever heard of your memory needing refreshing!" laughed his visitor. "Well, you know how I came back from the wild and woolly West and tried to make a comfortable home for Lilian. We were neither of us likely to marry at our time of life, and there were just the two of us left, and we'd both of us knocked about quite long enough 'on our own,' and so why not settle down together in the old place and be comfortable? At least that's how it struck me. Of course, as you know, we hadn't met for so long that we were practically strangers, and she knew the ways of civilization better than me, and I gave her a pretty free hand in setting up the establishment. I don't blame her, mind you, for setting the pace a bit too fast to last. My own blamed fault entirely. However, we aren't in a very deep hole, thank the Lord. In fact if I hadn't got to pay Sir Reginald back the twelve hundred pounds it would be all right, so far as I can figure out. But I want your exact statement, Mr. Rattar, and as quick as you can let me have it."

Simon nodded and grunted.

"You'll get it." And then he added, "I think I can assure you there is nothing to be concerned about."

Ned Cromarty smiled and a reckless light danced for a moment in his one efficient eye.

"I guess I almost wish there were something to be concerned about! Sir Reginald is always telling me I'm the head of the oldest branch of the whole Cromarty family and it's my duty to live in the house of my ancestors and be an ornament to the county, and all the rest of it. But I tell you it's a damned quiet life for a man who's had his eye put out with a broken whisky bottle and hanged the man who did it with his own hands!"

"Hanged him!" exclaimed the lawyer sharply.

"Oh, it wasn't merely for the eye.



"If you make me desperate——" He broke off and gazed dramatically into space for a moment.

That gave the performance a kind of relish it would otherwise have lacked, being a cold-blooded ceremony and a little awkward with the apparatus we had. We hanged him for murder, as a matter of fact. Now, between ourselves, Mr. Rattar, we don't want to crab our own county, but you must confess that real, good, serious crime is devilish scarce here, eh?"

Cromarty's eye was gleaming humorously, and Simon Rattar might have been thought the kind of tough customer who would have been amused by the joke. He seemed, however, to be affected unpleasantly and even a little startled.

"I—I trust we don't," he said.

"Well," his visitor agreed, "as it means that something or somebody has got to be sacrificed to start the sport of man hunting, I suppose there's something to be said for the quiet life. But personally I'd sooner be after men than grouse, from the point of view of get-

ting thorough satisfaction while it lasts. My sister says it means I haven't settled down properly yet—calls me the bold, bad bachelor!"

Through this speech Simon seemed to be looking at his visitor with an attention that bordered on fascination, and it was apparently with a slight effort that he asked at the end:

"Well, why don't you marry?"

"Marry?" exclaimed Ned Cromarty. "And where will you find the lady that's to succumb to my fascinations? I'm within a month of forty, Mr. Rattar. I've the mind, habits, and appearance of a backwoodsman, and I've one working eye left. A female collector of antique curiosities, or a retired wardress, might take on the job, but I can't think of any one else!"

He laughed as he spoke, and yet something remarkably like a sigh followed the laugh, and for a moment after he had ceased speaking his eye looked abstractedly into space.

Before either spoke again, the door opened and the clerk, seeing Mr. Rattar was still engaged, murmured a "beg pardon" and was about to retire again.

"What is it?" asked the lawyer.

"Miss Farmond is waiting to see you, sir."

"I'll let you know when I'm free," said Simon.

Had his eye been on his visitor as his clerk spoke, he might have noticed a curious commentary on Mr. Cromarty's professed lack of interest in woman-kind. His single eye lit up for an instant and he moved sharply in his chair, and then as suddenly repressed all sign of interest.

A minute or two later the visitor jumped up.

"Well," said he, "I guess you're pretty busy, and I've been talking too long as it is. Let me have that statement as quick as you like. Good morning!"

He strode to the door, shut it behind him, and then when he was on the landing, his movements became suddenly more leisurely. Instead of striding downstairs he stood looking curiously in turn at each closed door. It was an old-fashioned house and rather a rabbit warren of an office, and it would seem as though for some reason he wished to leave no door unwatched. In a moment he heard the lawyer's bell ring and very slowly he moved down a step or two while a clerk answered the call and withdrew. And then he took a cigar from his case, bit off the end, and felt for matches; all this being very deliberately done, while his eye followed the clerk. Thus when a girl emerged from the room along a passage, she met, apparently quite accidentally, Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland.

At the first glance it was quite evident that the meeting gave more pleasure to the gentleman than to the lady. Indeed, the girl seemed too disconcerted to hide the fact.

"Good morning, Miss Farmond," said he, as if he had no idea she had been within a mile of him. "You coming to see Simon on business, too?" And then taking the cue from her constrained manner, he added hurriedly and with a note of dejection he could not quite hide, "Well, good-by."

The girl's expression suddenly changed, and with that change the laird of Stanesland's curious movements became very explicable, for her face was singularly charming when she smiled. It was a rather pale but fresh and clear-skinned face, wide at the forehead and narrowing to a firm little chin, with long-lashed expressive eyes, and a serious expression in repose. Her smile was candid, a little coy and irresistibly engaging, and her voice was very pleasant, rather low, and most engaging, too. She was of middle height and dressed in mourning. Her age seemed under rather than over twenty.

"Oh," she said with a touch of hesitation at first. "I didn't mean—" She broke off, glancing at the clerk, who, being a discreet young man, was now in the background, and then with lowered voice confessed: "The fact is, Mr. Cromarty, I'm not really supposed to be here at all. That's to say, nobody knows I am."

Mr. Cromarty looked infinitely relieved.

"And you don't want anybody to know?" he said in his outspoken way. "Right you are. I can lie low and say nothing, or lie hard and say what you like; whichever you choose."

"Lying low will do," she smiled. "But please don't think I'm doing anything very wrong."

"I'll think what you tell me," he said gallantly. "I *was* thinking Silent Simon was in luck's way—but perhaps you're going to wig him?"

She laughed and shook her head.

"Can you imagine me daring to wig Mr. Simon Rattar?"

"I guess he needs waking up now and then like other people. He's been slacking over my business. In fact, I can't quite make him out this morning. He's not quite his usual self for some reason. Don't be afraid to wig him if he needs it!"

The clerk in the background coughed and Miss Cicely Farmond moved toward the door of the lawyer's room, but Ned Cromarty seemed reluctant to end the meeting so quickly.

"How did you come?" he asked.

"Walked," she smiled.

"Walked! And how are you going back?"

"Walk again."

"I say," he suggested eagerly, "I've got my trap in. Let me drive you!"

She hesitated a moment.

"It's awfully good of you to think of it——"

"That's settled then. I'll be on the lookout when you leave old Simon's den."

He raised his cap and went downstairs, this time without any hesitation. He had forgotten to light his cigar, and it was probably as a substitute for smoking that he found himself whistling.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE THIRD VISITOR.

Miss Cicely Farmond's air as she entered Simon Rattar's room seemed compounded of a little shyness, considerable trepidation, and yet more determination. In her low voice and with a fleeting smile she wished him good morning, like an acquaintance with whom she was quite familiar, and then, with a serious little frown, and fixing her engaging eyes very straight upon him, she made the surprising demand:

"Mr. Rattar, I want you to tell me honestly who I am."

For an instant Simon's cold eyes opened very wide, and then he was

gazing at her after his usual silent and steadfast manner.

"Who you are?" he repeated after a second's pause.

"Yes. Indeed, Mr. Rattar, I *insist* on knowing!"

Simon smiled slightly.

"And what makes you think I can assist you to—er—recover your identity, Miss Farmond?"

"To discover it, not recover it," she corrected. "Don't you really know that I am honestly quite ignorant?"

Mr. Rattar shook his head cautiously.

"It is not for me to hazard an opinion," he answered.

"Oh please, Mr. Rattar," she exclaimed, "don't be so dreadfully cautious! Surely you can't have thought that I knew all the time!"

Again he was silent for a moment, and then inquired:

"Why do you come to me now?"

"Because I *must* know! Because—well, because it is so unsatisfactory not knowing—for various reasons."

"And why are you so positive that I can tell you?"

"Because all my affairs and arrangements went through your hands, and of course you know!"

Again he seemed to reflect for a moment.

"May I ask, Miss Farmond," he inquired, "why, in that case, you think I shouldn't have told you before, and why—also in that case—I should tell you now?"

This inquiry seemed to disconcert Miss Farmond a little.

"Oh, of course I presume Sir Reginald and you had some reasons," she admitted.

"And don't you think, then, we have them still?"

"I can't honestly see why you should make such a mystery of it—especially as I can guess the truth perfectly easily!"

"If you can guess it——" he began.

"Oh, please don't answer me like that! Why won't you tell me?"

He seemed to consider the point for a moment, and then he said:

"I am not at all sure that I am at liberty to tell you, Miss Farmond, without further consultation."

"Has Sir Reginald really any good reasons for not telling me?"

"Have you asked him that question?"

"No," she confessed. "He and Lady Cromarty have been so frightfully kind, and yet so—so reserved on that subject, that I have never liked to ask them direct. But they know that I have guessed, and they haven't done anything to prevent me finding out more for myself, which means that they really are quite willing to let me find out if I can."

He shook his head.

"I am afraid I shall require more authority than that."

She pursed her lips and looked at the floor in silence, and then she rose.

"Well, if you absolutely refuse to tell me *anything*, Mr. Rattar, I suppose—"

A dejected little shrug completed her sentence, and as she turned toward the door her eloquent eyes looked at him for a moment beneath their long lashes with an expression in them that might have moved a statue. Although Simon Rattar had the reputation of being impervious to woman's wiles, he may have been moved by this unspoken appeal. He certainly seemed struck by something, for even as her back was turning toward him, he said suddenly, and in a distinctly different voice:

"You say you can guess yourself?"

She nodded, and added with a pathetic coaxing note in her low voice:

"But I want to *know*!"

"Supposing," he suggested, "you were to tell me precisely how much you do know already, and then I could judge whether the rest might or might not be divulged."

Her face brightened and she returned to her chair with a promptitude that suggested she was not unaccustomed to win a lost battle with these weapons.

"Well," she said, "it was only six months ago—when mother died—that I first had the least suspicion there was any mystery about me, anything to hide. I knew she hadn't always been happy, and that her trouble had something to do with my father, simply because she hardly ever mentioned him. But she lived at Eastbourne just like plenty of other widows, and we had a few friends, though never very many, and I was very happy at school, and so I never troubled much about things."

"And knew nothing up till six months ago?" asked Simon, who was following her story very attentively.

"Nothing at all. Then, about a month after mother's death, I got a note from you asking me to go up to London and meet Sir Reginald Cromarty. I had never even heard of him before! Well, I went, and he was simply as kind as—well, as he always is to everybody, and said he was a kind of connection of my family and asked me to pay them a long visit at Keldale."

"How long ago precisely was that?"

She looked a little surprised.

"Oh, you know exactly. Almost just four months ago, wasn't it?"

He nodded, but said nothing, and she went on:

"From the very first it had seemed very strange that I had never heard a word about the Cromartys from mother, and as soon as I got to Keldale and met Lady Cromarty, I felt sure there was something wrong—I mean that I wasn't an ordinary distant relation. For one thing, they never spoke of our relationship and exactly what sort of cousins we were, and considering how keen Sir Reginald is on his pedigree and all his relations and everybody, that alone made me certain I wasn't the



ordinary kind. That was obvious, wasn't it?"

"It seems so," the lawyer admitted cautiously.

"Of course it was! Well, one day I happened to be looking over an old photograph album and suddenly I saw my father's photograph! Mother had a miniature of him—I have it still, and I was certain it was the same man. I pulled myself together and asked Sir Reginald in a very ordinary voice who that was, and I could see that both he and Lady Cromarty jumped a little. He had to tell me it was his brother Alfred, and I discovered he had long been dead, but I didn't try to get any more information from them. I applied to Bisset."

She gave a little laugh and looked at him with a touch of defiance. His inscrutable countenance appeared to annoy her.

"Well?" he remarked.

"Perhaps you think I oughtn't to have gone to a butler about such a thing, but Bisset is practically one of the family, and I didn't give him the least idea of what I was after. I simply drew him on the subject of the Cromarty family history and among other things—that didn't so much interest me—I found that Mr. Alfred Cromarty was never married and seemed to have had rather a gay reputation."

She looked at him with an expression that would have immediately converted any susceptible man into a fellow conspirator, and asked in her most enticing voice:

"Need you ask what I guessed? What is the use in not telling me simply whether I have guessed right!"

Silent Simon's face remained a mask.

"What precisely did you guess?"

"That my mother wasn't married," she said, her voice falling very low, "and that I am really Sir Reginald's niece, though he never can acknowledge it—and I don't want him to! But I do

want to be sure. Dear Mr. Rattar, won't you tell me?"

"Dear Mr. Rattar" never relaxed a muscle.

"Your guess seems very probable," he admitted.

"But tell me definitely."

"Why?" he inquired coldly.

"Oh, have you no *curiosity* yourself—especially about who your parents were; supposing you didn't know?"

"Then it's only out of curiosity that you inquired?"

"Only!" she repeated with a world of woman's scorn. "But what sort of motives did you expect? I have walked in the whole way this morning just to end the suspense of wondering! Of course I'll never tell a soul you told me."

She threw on him a moving smile.

"You needn't actually tell me outright. Just use some legal word—'alibi' if I am right and 'forgery' if I'm wrong!"

Silent Simon's sudden glance chilled her smile.

She evidently felt she had been taking the law in vain.

"I only meant——" she began anxiously.

"I must consult Sir Reginald," he interrupted brusquely.

She made no further effort. That glance seemed to have subdued her spirit.

"I am sorry I have bothered you," she said as she went.

As the door closed behind her, Mr. Rattar took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow and his neck. And then he fell to work again upon the recent records of the firm. Yet, absorbed though he seemed, whenever a door opened or shut sharply, or a step sounded distinctly outside his room, he would look up quickly and listen, and that expression would come into his eye which both Mary MacLean and

Mr. Ison had described as the look of one who was watched.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AT NIGHT.

When Simon Rattar had come to his present villa, he had brought from his old house in the middle of the town—which had been his father's before him—a vast accumulation of old books and papers. Being a man who never threw away anything, and also a person of the utmost tidiness, he compromised by keeping this litter in the spare rooms at the top of the house. In fact, Simon was rather pleased at discovering this use for his superfluous apartments, for he hated wasting anything.

On this same morning, just before starting for his office, he had again called his housemaid and given her particular injunctions that these rooms were not to be disturbed during the day. He added that this was essential because he expected a gentleman that evening who would be going through some of the old papers with him.

Perhaps it was the vague feeling of disquiet which possessed Mary MacLean this morning that made his injunction seem a little curious. She had been with the master three years and never presumed or dreamt of presuming to touch his papers. He might have known that, thought she, without having to tell her not to. Indeed, she felt a little aggrieved at the command, and in the course of the morning she made a discovery that seemed to her a further reflection on her discretion.

When she came to dust the passage on which these rooms opened, her eye was at once caught by a sheet of white paper pinned to each of the three doors. On each of these sheets was written in her master's hand the words: "This room not to be entered. Papers to be undisturbed." The result may serve as a warning to those who take superfluous

precautions. Under ordinary circumstances Mary would never have thought of touching the handles of those doors. Now, she looked at them for a few moments and then tried the handle nearest to her. The door was locked. She tried the second and the third, and they were locked, too. And the three keys had all been removed.

"To think of the master locking the doors!" said she to herself after failing at each in turn. "As if I'd have tried to open them!"

That top story was of the semiattic kind, with roofs that sloped and a skylight in one of them and the slates close overhead. It was a gray windy morning, and as she stood there, alone in that large house save for the cook far away in the kitchen, with a loose slate rattling in the gusts, and a glimpse of clouds driving over the skylight, she began all at once to feel uncomfortable. Those locked doors were uncanny—something was not as it should be; there was a sinister moan in the wind; the slate did not rattle quite like an ordinary slate. Tales of her childhood, tales from the superstitious western islands, rushed into her mind. And then, all at once, she heard another sound. She heard it but for one instant, and then, with a pale face, she fled downstairs and stood for a space in the hall, trembling and wondering.

She wondered first whether the sound had really come from behind those locked doors, and whether it actually was some one stealthily moving. She wondered next whether she could bring herself to confide in cook and stand Janet's cheerful scorn. She ended by saying not a word, and waiting to see what happened when the master came home.

He returned as usual in time for a cup of tea. It was pretty dark by then and Mary was upstairs lighting the gas—but she did not venture up to the top floor. She heard Mr. Rattar come into

the hall, and then, quite distinctly this time, she heard overhead a dull sound, a kind of gentle thud. The next moment she heard the master running upstairs, and when he was safely past she ran even more swiftly down, and burst into the kitchen.

"There's something in yon top rooms!" she panted.

"There's something in your top story!" snapped cook; and poor Mary said no more.

When she brought his tea in to Mr. Rattar, she seemed to read in his first glance at her the same expression that had disturbed her in the morning, and yet the next moment he was speaking in his ordinary grumpy, laconic way.

"Have you noticed rats in the house?" he asked.

"Rats, sir!" she exclaimed. "Oh, no, sir, I don't think there are any rats."

"I saw one just now," he said. "If we see it again we must get some rat poison."

So it had only been a rat! Mary felt vastly relieved; and yet not altogether easy. One could not venture to doubt the master, but it was a queerlike sound for a rat to make.

Mr. Rattar had brought back a great many papers to-day and sat engrossed in them till dinner. After dinner he fell to work again, and then at about nine o'clock he rang for her and said:

"The gentleman I expect this evening will probably be late in coming. Don't sit up. I'll hear him and let him in myself. We shall be working late and I shall be going upstairs about those papers. If you hear anybody moving about, it will only be this gentleman and myself."

This was rather a long speech for Silent Simon, and Mary thought it considerable of him to explain any nocturnal sounds beforehand; unusually considerate, in fact, for he seldom went out of his way to explain things. And yet those few minutes in his presence made

her uncomfortable afresh. She could not keep her eyes away from that red cut on his chin. It made him seem odd-like, she thought. And then as she passed through the hall she heard faintly from the upper regions that slate rattling again. At least it was either the slate or—she recalled a story of her childhood, and hurried on to the kitchen.

She and the cook shared the same bedroom. It was fairly large and had two beds in it, and along with the kitchen and other back premises, it was shut off from the front part of the house by a door at the end of the hall. Cook was asleep within ten minutes. Mary could hear her heavy breathing above the incessant droning and whistling of the wind, and she envied her with all her Highland heart. In her own glen people would have understood how she felt, but here she dared not confess lest she were laughed at. It was such a vague and nameless feeling, a sixth sense warning her that all was not well; that *something* was in the air. The longer she lay awake the more certain she grew that evil was afoot; and yet what could be its shape? Everything in that quiet and respectable household was going, on exactly as usual, everything that any one else would have considered material. The little things she had noticed would be considered absurd trifles by the sensible. She knew that as well as they.

She thought she had been in bed about an hour, though the time passed so slowly that it might have been less, when she heard, faintly and gently, but quite distinctly, the door from the hall into the back premises being opened. It seemed to be held open for nearly a minute, as though some one were standing there listening. She moved a little and the bed creaked, and then, as gently as it had been opened, the door was closed again.

Had the intruder come through or



And then, all at once, she heard another sound. She heard it but for one instant, and then, with a pale face, she fled downstairs.

gone away? And could it only be the master, doing this curious thing, or was it some one—or something—else? Dreadful minutes passed, but there was not a sound of any one moving in the back passage, or in the kitchen, and

then in the distance she could hear the grating noise of the front door being opened and the rush of wind that accompanied it. It was closed sharply in a moment and she could catch the sound of steps in the hall and the master's voice making some remark. Another voice replied, gruff and muffled and indistinct, and then again the master spoke. Evidently the late caller had arrived, and a moment later she heard the library door shut and it was plain that he and Mr. Ratter were closeted there.

They seemed to remain in the library about quarter of an hour before the door opened again, and in a moment the stairs were creaking faintly. Evidently one or both were going up for the old papers.

All this was exactly what she had been led to expect. She ought to have been reassured, yet, for no reason at all, the conviction remained as intense as ever, that something unspeakable was happening in this respectable house. The minutes dragged by till quite half an hour must have passed, and then she heard the steps descending, very slowly this time, and very heavily. The obvious explanation

was that they were bringing down one of those boxes filled with dusty papers, yet though Mary knew perfectly that this was the common sense of the matter, a feeling of horror increased till she could scarcely refrain from crying out. If cook had not such a quick temper and such a healthy contempt for this kind of fancy, she would have rushed across to her bed. As it was, she simply lay and trembled.

The steps sounded still heavy but more muffled on the hall carpet. Whether they were the steps of one man or two she could not feel sure. Then she heard the front door open again and close, so that it seemed plain that the visitor had taken the box with him and gone away. And with this departure came a sense of relief, as devoid of rational foundation as the sense of horror before. She felt at last that if she could only hear the master going upstairs to bed, she might go to sleep.

But though she listened hard as she lay there in the oppressive dark, she heard not another sound. She had been asleep she knew not how long when she awoke drowsily with a confused impression that the front door had been shut again. How late it was, she could but guess—about three or four in the morning her instinct told her. But then came sleep again and in the morning, the last part of her recollections was a little uncertain.

At breakfast the master was as silently formidable as ever and she said not a word about his visitor. When Mary went to the top floor later, the papers were off the doors and the keys replaced.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DRIVE HOME.

Under the gray autumnal sky Miss Cicely Farmond drove out of the town wrapped in Ned Cromarty's overcoat. He assured her he never felt cold, and

as she glanced a little shyly up at the strapping figure by her side, she said to herself that he certainly was the toughest-looking man of her acquaintance, and she felt a little less contrition for the loan. She was an independent young lady and from no one else would she have accepted such a favor, but the laird of Stanesland had such an off-hand, authoritative way with him that, somewhat to her own surprise, she had protested—and submitted.

The trap was a high dogcart and the mare a flyer.

"What a splendid horse!" she exclaimed as they spun up the first hill.

"Isn't she?" said Ned. "And she can go all the way like this, too."

Cicely was therefore a little surprised when at the next hill this flyer was brought to a walk.

"I thought we were going all the way like that!" she laughed.

Ned glanced down at her.

"Are you in a hurry?" he inquired.

"Not particularly," she admitted.

"No more am I," said he, and this time he smiled down at her in a very friendly way.

So far they had talked casually on any indifferent subject that came to hand, but now his manner grew a little more intimate.

"Are you going to stay on with the Cromartys long?" he asked.

"I am wondering myself," she confessed.

"I hope you will," he said bluntly.

"It is very kind of you to say so," she said smiling at him a little shyly.

"I mean it. The fact is, Miss Farmond, you are a bit of a treat."

The quaintness of the phrase was irresistible and she laughed outright.

"Am I!"

"It's a fact," said he. "You see I live an odd, lonely kind of life here, and for most of my career I've lived an odd, lonely kind of life, too, so far as girls are concerned. It may sound rum

to you to hear a backwoods hunk of my time of life confessing to finding a girl of your age a bit of a treat; but it's a fact."

"Yes," she said. "I should have thought I would seem rather young and foolish."

"Lord, I don't mean that!" he exclaimed. "I mean that I must seem a pretty uninteresting bit of elderly shoe-leather."

"Uninteresting? Oh, no!" she cried in protest, and then checked herself while her color rose a little.

He smiled humorously.

"I can't see you out of this glass eye unless I turn round, so whether you're pulling my leg or not, I don't know; but I was just saying to old Simon that the only kind of lady likely to take an interest in me was a female collector of antique curiosities, and you don't seem that sort, Miss Farmond."

She said nothing for a moment, and then asked:

"Were you discussing ladies, then, with Mr. Rattar?"

He also paused for a moment before replying:

"Incidentally, in the course of a gossip, as the old chap hadn't got my business ready for me. By the way, did you get much change out of him?"

She shook her head a little mournfully.

"Nothing at all. He just asked questions instead of answering them."

"So he did with me! Confound the man. I fancy he has made too much money and is beginning to take it easy. That's one advantage of not being too rich, Miss Farmond; it keeps you from waxing fat."

"I'm not likely to wax fat then!" she laughed, and yet it was not quite a cheerful laugh.

He turned quickly and looked at her sympathetically.

"That your trouble?" he inquired in his outspoken way.

Cicely was not by way of giving her confidences easily, but this straightforward, friendly attack penetrated her reserve.

"It makes one so dependent," she said, her voice even lower than usual.

"That must be the devil," he admitted.

"It is!" said she.

He whipped up the mare and ruminated in silence. Then he remarked:

"I'm just wondering."

"Wondering what?" she smiled.

"What the devil there can be that isn't utterly uninteresting about me—assuming you weren't pulling my leg."

"Oh," she said. "No man can be uninteresting who has seen as much and done as much as you have."

"The Lord keep you of that opinion!" he said, half humorously, but only half, it seemed. "It's true I've knocked about and been knocked about, but I'd have thought you'd have judged more by results."

She laughed a little low laugh.

"Do you think yourself the results are very bad?"

"Judging by the mirror, beastly! Judging by other standards—well, one can't see oneself in one's full naked horror. Thank Heaven for it, too! But I'm not well read, and I'm not—but what's the good in telling you? You're clever enough to see for yourself."

For a man who had no intention of paying compliments, Ned Cromarty had a singular gift for administering the pleasantest—because it was so evidently the most genuine—form of flattery. In fact, had he but known it, he was a universal favorite with women, whenever he happened to meet them. He had not the least suspicion of the fact, which made him all the more favored.

"I don't know very many men," said Cicely with her serious expression and a conscientious air, "and so perhaps I am not a good judge, but certainly you seem to me quite unlike all the others."



"I told you," he laughed, "that the female would have to be a bit of a collector."

"Oh," she cried, quite serious still, "I don't mean that in the least. I don't like freaks a bit myself. I only mean—well, people do differ in character and experience, don't they?"

"I guess you're pretty wise," said he simply. "And I'm sized up right enough. However, the trouble at present is that this blamed mare goes too fast!"

On their left, the chimneys and roof of a large mansion showed through the surrounding trees. In this wind-swept seaboard country, its acres of plantation were a conspicuous landmark, and marked it as the seat of some outstanding local magnate. These trees were carried down to the road in a narrow belt inclosing an avenue that ended in a lodge and gates. At the same time that the lodge came into view round a bend in the road, a man on a bicycle appeared ahead of them, going in the same direction, and bent over his handle-bars against the wind.

"Hello, that's surely Malcolm Cromarty!" said Ned.

"So it is!" she exclaimed, and there was a note of surprise in her voice. "I wonder where he has been."

The cyclist dismounted at the lodge gates a few moments before the trap pulled up there, too, and the young man turned and greeted them. Or rather he greeted Miss Farmond, for his smile was clearly aimed at her alone.

"Hello! Where have you been?" he cried.

"Where have you?" she retorted as she jumped out and let him help her off with the driving coat.

They made a remarkably good-looking young couple standing together there on the road and their manner to one another was evidently that of two people who knew each other well. Sitting

on his high driving seat, Ned Cromarty turned his head well round so as to bring his sound eye to bear and looked at them in silence. When she handed him his coat and thanked him afresh, he merely laughed, told her, in his outspoken way, that all the fun had been his, and whipped up his mare.

"That's more the sort of fellow!" he said to himself gloomily, and for a while the thought seemed to keep him depressed. And then, as he let the recollections of their drive have their own way undisturbed, he began to smile again, and kept smiling most of the way home.

The road drew ever nearer to the sea, and soon he was driving up to an ancient building on the very brink of the cliffs. The sea crashed white below and stretched gray and cold to the horizon. The wind whistled round the battlements and sighed through the stunted trees, and Ned—who had been too absorbed to remember his coat—slapped his arms and stamped his feet as he descended before a nail-studded front door with a battered coat of arms above it.

"Lord, what a place!" he said to himself, half critically, half affectionately.

The old castle of Stanesland was but a small house as castles, or even mansions, go, almost devoid of architectural ornament, and evidently built in a sterner age chiefly for security, and but little embellished by the taste of more degenerate times. As a specimen of a small early fifteenth-century castle, it was excellent; as a home, it was inconvenience incarnate. How so many drafts found their way through such thick walls was a perennial mystery, and how to convey dishes from the kitchen to the dining room without their getting cold, an almost insoluble problem.

The laird and his sister sat down to lunch and in about ten minutes Miss Cromarty remarked:

"So you drove Cicely Farmond home?"

Her brother nodded. He had mentioned the fact as soon as he came in, and rather wondered why she referred to it again.

Miss Cromarty smiled her own peculiar, shrewd, worldly little smile, and said:

"You are very silent, Ned."

Lilian Cromarty was a few years older than her brother; though one would hardly have guessed it. Her trim figure, bright eyes, vivacity of expression when she chose to be vivacious, and quick movements might have belonged to a woman twenty years younger. She had never been pretty, but she was always perfectly dressed, and her smile could be anything she chose to make it. Until her youngest brother came into the property, the place had been let and she had lived with her friends and relations. She had had a good time, she always frankly confessed, but as frankly admitted that it was a relief to settle down at last.

"I was thinking," said her brother.

"About Cicely?" she asked in her frankly audacious way.

He opened his eyes for a moment and then laughed.

"You needn't guess again, Lilian," he admitted.

"Funny little thing," she observed.

"Funny?" he repeated, and his tone brought an almost imperceptible change of expression into his sister's eye.

"Oh," she said as though throwing the subject aside, "she is nice and quite pretty, but very young, and not very sophisticated; is she? However, I should think she would be a great success as a man's girl. That low voice and those eyes of hers are very effective. Pass me the salt, Ned."

Ned looked at her in silence, and then over her shoulder through the square window set in the vast thickness of the wall, to the gray horizon line.

"I guess you've recommended me to marry once or twice, Lilian," he observed.

"Don't 'guess' please!" she laughed, "or I'll stick my bowie knife or gun or something into you! Yes, I've always advised you to marry—if you found the right kind of wife."

She took some credit to herself for this disinterested advice, since, if he accepted it, the consequences would be decidedly disconcerting to herself; but she had never pointed out any specific lady nor made any conspicuous effort to find one for him.

"Well——" he began, and then broke off.

"You're not thinking of Cicely, are you?" she asked, still in the same bright, light way, but with a quick searching look at him.

"It seems a bit absurd. I don't imagine for an instant she'd look at me."

"Wouldn't look——" she began derisively, and then pulled herself up very sharply, and altered her tactics on the instant. "She might think you a little too old for her," she said in a tone of entire agreement with him.

"And also that I've got one too few eyes, and, in fact, several other criticisms."

His sister shrugged her shoulders.

"A girl of that age might think those things," she admitted, "but it seems to me that the criticism ought to be on the other side. Who is she?"

Ned looked at her and she broke into a laugh.

"Well," she said. "I suppose we both have a pretty good idea. She's somebody's something—Alfred Cromarty's, I believe; though of course her mother may have fibbed, for she doesn't look much like the Cromartys. Anyhow, that pretty well puts her out of the question."

"Why?"

"If you were a mere nobody, it mightn't make so much difference, but

your wife must have some sort of a family behind her. One doesn't have to be a snob to think that one mother and a guess at the father is hardly enough!"

"After all, that's up to me. I wouldn't be wanting to marry her great-mothers, even if she had any."

"My dear Ned, I'm no prude, but there's always some devilment in the blood in these cases."

"Rot!" said he.

"Well, rot if you like, but I know more than one instance."

He said nothing for a moment, and as he sat in silence, a look of keen anxiety came into her eyes. She hid it instantly and compressed her lips, and then abruptly her brother said:

"I wonder whether she's at all taken up with Malcolm Cromarty!"

"They have spent some months in the same house. At their age the consequences seem pretty inevitable."

She had contrived to suggest a little more than she said, and he started.

"What do you know?" he demanded.

"Oh, of course, there would be a dreadful row if anything was actually known abroad. Sir Reginald has probably other ideas for his heir."

"Then there is something between them?"

She nodded, and though she still did not meet his eye, he accepted the nod with a grim look that passed in a moment into a melancholy laugh.

"Well," he said, rising, "it was a pretty absurd idea anyhow. I'll go and have a look at myself in the glass and try to see the funny side of it!"

His sister sat very still after he had left the room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SIR REGINALD.

Cicely Farmond and Malcolm Cromarty walked up the avenue together, he pushing his bicycle, she walking by his side with a more than usually serious expression.

"Then you won't tell me where you've been?" said he.

"You won't tell me where you've been!"

He was silent for a moment and then said confidentially:

"We might as well say we've been somewhere together, I mean, if any one asks."

"Thank you, I don't need to fib," said she.

"I don't mean I need to. Only——" he seemed to find it difficult to explain.

"I shall merely say I have been for a walk, and you need only say you have been for a ride—if you don't want to say where you have really been."

"And if you don't want to mention that you were driving with Ned Cromarty," he retorted.

"He only very kindly offered me a lift!"

She looked quickly at him as she spoke and as quickly away again. The glint in her eye seemed to displease him.

"You needn't always be so sharp with me, Cicely," he complained.

"You shouldn't say stupid things."

Both were silent for a space and then in a low, mournful voice he said:

"I wish I knew how to win your sympathy, Cicely. You don't absolutely hate me, do you?"

"Of course I don't hate you. But the way to get a girl's sympathy is not always to keep asking for it."

He looked displeased again.

"I don't believe you know what I mean!"

"I don't believe you do either."

He grew tender.

"Your sympathy, Cicely, would make all the difference in my life!"

"Now, Malcolm——" she began in a warning voice.

"Oh, I am not asking you to love me again," he assured her quickly. "It is only sympathy I demand!"

"But you mix them up so easily. It isn't safe to give you anything."

"I won't again!" he assured her.

"Well," she said, though not very sympathetically. "What do want to be sympathized with about now?"

"When you offer me sympathy in that tone, I can't give you my confidence!" he said unhappily.

"Really, Malcolm, how can I possibly tell what your confidence is going to be, beforehand? Perhaps it won't deserve sympathy."

"If you knew the state of my affairs!" he said darkly.

"A few days ago you told me they were very promising," she said with a little smile.

"So they would be—so they are—if—if only you would care for me, Cicely!"

"You tell me they are promising, when you want me to marry you, and desperate, when you want me to sympathize with you," she said a little cruelly. "Which am I to believe?"

"Hush! Here's Sir Reginald," he said.

The gentleman who came through a door in the walled garden beside the house was a fresh-colored, white-haired man of sixty, slender and not above middle height, but very erect, and with the carriage of a person a little conscious of being of some importance. Sir Reginald Cromarty was, in fact, extremely conscious of his position in life, and the rather superior and condescending air he was wont to assume in general society made it a little difficult for a stranger to believe that he could actually be the most popular person in the county; especially, as it was not hard to discover that his temper could easily become peppery upon provocation. If, however, the stranger chanced to provide the worthy baronet with even the smallest opening of exhibiting his extraordinary kindness of heart—were it only by getting wet in a shower or mislaying a walking stick—he would quickly comprehend. And

the baronet's sympathy never waited to be summoned; it seemed to hover constantly over all men and women he met.

He himself was totally unconscious of this attribute, and imagined the respect in which he was held to be due to his lineage, rank, and superior breeding and understanding. Indeed, few people in this world can have cut a more dissimilar figure as seen from his own and from other men's eyes; though as both parties were equally pleased with Sir Reginald Cromarty, it mattered little.

At the sight of Cicely, his smile revealed the warmth of his feelings in that direction.

"Ah, my dear girl," said he, "we've been looking for you. Where have you been?"

"I've been having a walk."

She smiled at him as she answered, and on his side it was easy to see that the good gentleman was enraptured, and that Miss Farmond was not likely to be severely cross-examined as to her movements. Toward Malcolm, on the other hand, though his greeting was kindly enough, his eye was critical. The young author's tie seemed to be regarded with particular displeasure.

"My God, Margaret, imagine being found dead with such a thing on!" he had exclaimed to his wife, after his first sight of it; and time had done nothing to diminish his distaste for this indication of a foreign way of life.

Lady Cromarty came out of the garden a moment later. She was a dark, thin-faced lady with a gracious manner when she spoke, but with lips that were usually kept very tight shut, and an eye that could easily be hard.

"Nearly time for lunch," she said. "You two had better hurry up!"

The young people hurried on to the house and the baronet and his lady walked slowly behind.

"So they have been away all morning together, Reginald," she remarked.



The man had heard strange news and stopped to pass it on.

"Oh, I don't think so," said he. "He had his bicycle and she has been walking."

"You are really too unsuspicious, Reggie!"

"A woman, my dear, is perhaps a little too much the reverse where a young couple is concerned. I have told you before, and I repeat it now emphatically, that neither Cicely nor Malcolm is in a position to contemplate matrimony for an instant."

"He is your heir—and Cicely is quite aware of it."

"I assure you, Margaret," he said with great conviction, "that Cicely is not a girl with mercenary motives. She is quite charming—"

"Oh, I know your opinion of her, Reggie," Lady Cromarty broke in a trifle impatiently, "and I am fond of her too, as you know. Still, I don't believe a girl who can use her eyes so effectively is quite as simple as you think."

Sir Reginald laughed indulgently.

"Really, my love, even the best of women are sometimes a trifle unchar-

itable! But in any case, Malcolm has quite enough sense of his future position to realize that his wife must be somebody without the blemish on her birth, which is no fault of dear Cicely's, but—er—makes her ineligible for this particular position."

"I wish I could think that Malcolm is the kind of young man who would consult anything but his own wishes. I have told you often enough, Reggie, that I don't think it is wise to keep these two young people living here in the same house for months on end."

"But what can one do?" asked the benevolent baronet. "Neither of them has a home. Hang it, I'm the head of their family and I'm bound to show them a little hospitality."

"But Malcolm has rooms in town. He needn't spend months on end at Keldale."

The baronet was silent for a moment. Then he said:

"To tell the truth, I'm afraid Malcolm is not turning out so well as I had hoped. He certainly ought to be away doing something. At the same time, hang it, you wouldn't have me turn my own kinsman and heir out of my house, Margaret?"

Lady Cromarty sighed, and then her thin lips tightened.

"You are hopeless, Reggie. I sometimes feel as if I were here merely as matron of a home for lost Cromartys! Well, I hope your confidence won't be abused. I confess I don't feel very comfortable about it myself."

"Well, well," said Sir Reginald. "My own eyes are open too, I assure you. I shall watch them very carefully at lunch, in the light of what you have been saying."

The baronet was an old Etonian, and as his life had been somewhat uneventful since, he was in the habit of drawing very largely on his recollections of that nursery of learning. Lunch had hardly begun before a ques-

tion from Cicely set him going, and for the rest of the meal he regaled her with these reminiscences.

After luncheon he said to his wife:

"Upon my word, I noticed nothing whatever amiss. Cicely is a very sensible as well as a deuced pretty girl."

"I happened to look at Malcolm occasionally," said she.

Sir Reginald thought that she seemed to imply more than she said, but then women were like that, he had noticed, and if one took all their implications into account, life would be a troublesome affair.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A PHILOSOPHER.

During luncheon an exceedingly efficient person had been moving briskly behind the chairs. His face was so expressionless, his mouth so tightly closed, and his air of concentration on the business in hand so intense, that he seemed the perfect type of the silent butler. But as soon as the meal was over, and while Cicely still stood in the hall listening with a dubious eye to Malcolm's suggestion of a game of billiards, Mr. James Bisset revealed the other side of his personality. He came up to the young couple with just sufficient deference, but no more, and in an accent which experts would have recognized as the hallmark of the western part of North Britain, said:

"Excuse me, miss, but I've mended your bicycle and I'll show it to you if ye like, and just explain the principle of the thing."

There was at least as much command as invitation in his tones. The billiard invitation was refused, and with a hidden smile Cicely followed him to the bicycle house.

Expert knowledge was James Bisset's foible. Of some subjects, such as waiting on table, carpentry, and mending bicycles, it was practical; of others,



such as shooting, gardening, and motor-ing, it was more theoretical. To Sir Reginald and my lady he was quite indispensable, for he could repair almost anything, knew his own more particular business from A to Z, and was ready at any moment to shoulder any responsibility. Sir Reginald's keeper, gardener, and chauffeur were apt, however, to be a trifle less enthusiastic, Mr. Bisset's passion for expounding the principles of their professions sometimes exceeding his tact.

In person, he was an active, stoutly built man—though far too energetic to be fat—with blunt, rounded features, eyes a little protruding, and sandy hair and a reddish complexion which made his age an unguessable secret. He might have been in the thirties or he might have been in the fifties.

"With regard to these ladies' bicycles, miss——" he began with a lecturer's air.

But by this time Cicely was also an expert in side-tracking her friend's theoretical essays.

"Oh, how clever of you!" she exclaimed rapturously. "It looks as good as ever!"

The interruption was too gratifying to offend.

"Better in some ways," he said complacently. "The principle of these things is——"

"I did miss it this morning," she hurried on. "In fact, I had to have quite a long walk. Luckily Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland gave me a lift coming home."

"Oh, indeed, miss? Stanesland gave ye a lift, did he? An interesting gentleman yon."

This time she made no effort to divert Mr. Bisset's train of thought.

"You think Mr. Cromarty interesting, then?" said she.

"They say he's hanged a man with his ain hands," said Bisset impressively.

"What!" she cried.

"For good and sufficient reason, we'll hope, miss. But whatever the way of it, it makes a gentleman more interesting in a kin' of way than the usual run. And then looking at the thing on general principles, the theory of hanging is——"

"Oh, but surely," she interrupted, "that isn't the only reason why Mr. Cromarty—I mean why you think he is interesting?"

"There's that glass eye, too. That's very interesting, miss."

She still seemed unsatisfied.

"His glass eye! Oh—you mean it has a story?"

"Vera possibly. He says himself it was done wi' a whisky bottle, but possibly that's making the best of it. But what interests me, miss, about yon eye is this——"

He paused dramatically and she inquired in an encouraging voice:

"Yes, Bisset?"

"It's the principle of introducing a foreign substance so near the man's brain. What's glass? What's it consist of?"

"I—I don't know," confessed Cicely weakly.

"Silica! And what's silica? Practically the same as sand! Well, now, if ye put a handful of sand into a man's brain—or anyhow next door to it—it's bound to have some effect, bound to have some effect!"

Bisset's voice fell to a very serious note, and as he was famous for the range of his reading, and was generally said to know practically by heart "The People's Self-Educator in Science and Art," Cicely asked a little apprehensively:

"But what effect can it possibly have?"

"It might take him different ways," said the philosopher cautiously though somberly. "But it's a good thing, anyway, Miss Farmond, that the laird of Stanesland is no likely to get married."

"Isn't he?" she asked, again with that encouraging note.

Bisset replied with another question, asked in an ominous voice:

"Have ye seen yon castle o' his, miss?"

Cicely nodded.

"I called there once with Lady Cromarty."

"A most interesting place, miss, illustrating the principle of thae castles very instructively."

Mr. Bisset had evidently been studying architecture as well as science, and no doubt would have given Miss Farmond some valuable information on the subject. But she seemed to lack enthusiasm for it to-day.

"But will the castle prevent him marrying?" she inquired with a smile.

"The lady in it will," said the philosopher with a sudden descent into worldly shrewdness.

"Miss Cromarty! Why?"

"She's mair comfortable there than setting off on her travels again. That's a fac', miss."

"But—but supposing he——" Cicely began and then paused.

"Oh, the laird's no the marrying sort anyhow. He says to me himself one day, when I'd taken the liberty of suggesting that a lady would suit the castle fine—we was shooting and I was carrying his cartridges, which I do for amusement, miss, whiles—'Bisset,' says he, 'the lady will have to be a damned keen shot to think me worth a cartridge. I'm too tough for the table,' says he, 'and not ornamental enough to stuff. They've let me off so far, and why the he—' begging your pardon, miss, but Stanesland uses strong expressions sometimes, 'Why the something,' says he, 'should they want to put me in the bag now? I'm happier free—and so's the lady.' But he's a grand shot and a vera friendly gentleman, vera friendly indeed. It's a pity, though, he's that ugly."

"Ugly!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I don't think him ugly at all. He's very striking looking. I think he is rather handsome."

Bisset looked at her with a benevolently reproving eye.

"Weel, miss, it's all a matter of taste, but to my mind Stanesland is a fine gentleman, but the vera opposite extreme from a Venus." He broke off and glanced toward the house. "Oh, help us! There's one of thae helpless women crying on me. How this house would get on wanting me——"

He left Miss Farmond to paint the gloomy picture for herself.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE LETTER.

It was a few days later that Cicely looked up from the local paper she was reading and asked:

"Who was George Rattar?"

Sir Reginald laid down his book and looked at her in some surprise.

"George Rattar? What do you know about him?"

"I see the announcement of his death. 'Son of the late John Simon Rattar' he's called."

"That's Silent Simon's brother!" exclaimed Sir Reginald. "Where did he die?"

"In New York, it says."

Sir Reginald turned to his wife.

"We can hardly send our sympathies to Simon on this bereavement!"

"No," she said significantly. "I suppose congratulations would be more appropriate."

The baronet took the paper from Cicely and studied it himself.

"Died about a fortnight ago, I see," he observed. "I wonder whether Simon put this announcement in himself, or whether brother George arranged it in his will? It would be quite like the fellow to have this posthumous wipe at Simon. George had a certain

sense of humor—which Simon lacks. And there was certainly no love lost between them!"

"Why should it annoy Mr. Rattar?" asked Cicely.

"Because brother George was not a member of his family he would care to be reminded of. Though on the other hand, Simon is as hard as whinstone and has as much sentiment as this teapot, and he may have put the notice in himself simply to show the world he was rid of the fellow."

"What was George Rattar then?" inquired Cicely.

"He was once Simon Rattar's partner, wasn't he, Reginald?" said Lady Cromarty. "And then he swindled him, didn't he?"

"Swindled several other people as well," said Sir Reginald. "Myself included. However, the thing was hushed up, and brother George disappeared. Then he took to forgery on his own account, and among other people's signatures he imitated with remarkable success was Simon's. This let old Simon in for it again, and there was no hushing it up a second time. Simon gave evidence against him without mercy, and since then George had been his majesty's guest for a number of years. So if you meet Mr. Simon Rattar, Cicely, you'd better not tell him how sorry you are to hear of poor George's decease!"

"I wish I could remember him more distinctly," said Lady Cromarty. "I'm afraid I always mix him up with our friend Mr. Simon."

"It's little wonder," her husband replied. "They were twins. George was the one with a mustache; one knew them apart by that. Extraordinary thing, it has always seemed to me, that their natures should have been so different."

"Perhaps," suggested Cicely compassionately, with her serious air, "it was only that George was tempted."

Sir Reginald laughed heartily.

"You little cynic!" he cried. "You mean to insinuate that if you tempted Simon, he'd be as bad a hat as his brother?"

"Oh, no!" cried Cicely. "I meant——"

"Tempt him and see!" chuckled the baronet. "And we'll have a little bet on the result!" He was glancing at the paper as he laughed, and now he suddenly stopped laughing and exclaimed: "Hello! Here's a much more serious loss for our friend. Would you like to earn a pound, Cicely?"

"Very much," said she.

"Well, then, if you search the road very carefully between Mr. Simon Rattar's residence and his office you may find his signet ring and obtain the advertised, and I may say princely, reward of one pound."

"Only a pound!" exclaimed Lady Cromarty, "for that handsome old ring of his?"

"If he had offered a penny more, I should have taken my business out of his hands!" laughed Sir Reginald. "It would have meant that Silent Simon wasn't himself any longer. A pound is exactly his figure; a respectable sum, but not extravagant."

"What day did he lose it?" asked Cicely.

"The advertisement doesn't say."

"He wasn't wearing it——" Cicely pulled herself up sharply.

"When?" asked Lady Cromarty.

"Where can I have seen him last?" wondered Cicely with an innocent air.

"Not for two or three weeks certainly," said Lady Cromarty decisively. "And he can't have lost it then if this advertisement is only just put in."

"No, of course not," Cicely agreed.

"Well," said Sir Reginald, "he'll miss his ring more than his brother! And remember, Cicely, you get a pound for finding the ring, and you win a pair of gloves if you can tempt Simon to

stray from the paths of honesty and virtue! By jingo, I'll give you the gloves if you can even make him tell a good sporting lie!" \*

When the good baronet was in this humor no man could excel him in geniality, and, to do him justice, a kindly temper and hearty spirits were the rule with him six days out of seven. On the other hand, he was easily ruffled, and his tempers were hot while they lasted. Upon the very next morning there arose on the horizon a little cloud, a cloud that seemed at the moment the merest fleck of vapor, which upset him, his family thought, quite unduly.

It took the form of a business letter from Mr. Simon Rattar, a letter on the surface perfectly innocuous and formally polite. Yet Sir Reginald seemed considerably disturbed.

"Damn the man!" he exclaimed as he cast it on the breakfast table.

"Reggie!" expostulated his wife gently. "What's the matter?"

"Matter?" snapped her husband, "Simon Rattar has the impudence to tell me he is letting the farm of Castle-knowe to that fellow Shearer, after all!"

"But why not? You meant to some time ago, I know."

"Some time ago, certainly. But I had a long talk with Simon ten days ago and told him what I'd heard about Shearer and said I wouldn't have the fellow on my property at any price. I don't believe the man is solvent, in the first place; and in the second place he's a socialistic, quarrelsome, mischievous fellow!"

"And what did Mr. Rattar think?"

"He tried to make some allowances for the man, but in the end when he saw I had made up my mind, he professed to agree with me and said he would look out for another tenant. Now he tells me that the matter is settled as per my instructions of the

eighth. That's weeks ago, and not a word does he say about our conversation canceling the whole instructions!"

"Then Shearer gets the farm?"

"No, he doesn't! I'm dashed if he does! I shall send Mr. Simon a letter that will make him sit up! He's got to alter the arrangement somehow."

He turned to Malcolm and added:

"When your time comes, Malcolm, beware of having a factor who has run the place so long that he thinks it's his own property! By gad, I'm going to tell him a bit of my mind!"

During the rest of breakfast he glanced at the letter once or twice, and each time his brows contracted, but he said nothing more in the presence of Cicely and Malcolm. After he had left the dining room, however, Lady Cromarty followed him and said:

"Don't be too hasty with Mr. Rattar, Reggie! After all, the talk may have slipped his memory."

"Slipped his memory? If you had heard it, Margaret, you'd know better. I was a bit cross with him for a minute or two then, which I hardly ever am, and that alone would make him remember it, one would think. We talked for over an hour on the business and the upshot was clear and final. No, no, he has got a bit above himself and wants a touch of the curb."

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'm going to send in a note by car and tell him to come out and see me about the business at once."

"Let me see the letter before you send it, Reggie."

He seemed to growl assent, but when she next saw him the letter had gone; and from the baronet's somewhat crusty explanation, she suspected that it was a little sharper than he knew she would have approved.

When the car returned, his annoyance was increased again for a space. Mr. Rattar had sent a brief reply that



"You're one of the family, sir, and I know you'll be wanting to find out who killed the master."

he was too busy to come out that afternoon, but he would call on Sir Reginald in the morning. For a time this answer kept Sir Reginald in a state of renewed irritation, and then his natural good humor began to prevail, till by dinner time he was quite calm again, and after dinner, in as genial humor as he had been in the day before.

He played a game of pyramids with Cicely and Malcolm in the billiard room, and then he and Cicely joined Lady Cromarty in the drawing-room, while the young author went up to his room to work, he declared. He had a large bedroom furnished half as a sitting room, to which he retired each night to compose his masterpieces as soon as it became impossible to enjoy Miss Farmond's company without having to share it in the drawing-room with his host and hostess. At least, that was the explanation of his procedure given by Lady Cromarty, whose eye was never more critical than when it studied her husband's kinsman and heir.

Lady Cromarty's eye was not uncritical also of Cicely at times, but to-night she was so relieved to see how Sir Reginald's temper improved under her smiles and half shy glances, that she let her stay up later than usual. Then when she and the girl went up to bed, she asked her husband if he would be late.

"The magazines came this morning," said he, "I'd better sleep in my dressing room."

The baronet was apt to sit up late when he had anything to read that held his fancy, and the procedure of sleeping in his dressing room was commonly followed upon such occasions.

He bade them good night, and went off toward the library, and a few minutes later, as they were going upstairs, they heard the library door shut.

When they came to Lady Cromarty's room, Cicely said good night to her

hostess and turned down the passage that led to her own bedroom. A door opened quietly as she passed and a voice whispered:

"Cicely!"

She stopped and regarded the young author with a reproving eye.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked.

"I just wanted to speak to you!" he pleaded.

"Now, Malcolm," she said severely, "you know quite well that Lady Cromarty trusts us *not* to do this sort of thing!"

"She's in her room, isn't she?"

"What does that matter?"

"And where's Sir Reginald?"

"Still in the library."

"Sitting up late?"

"Yes, but that doesn't matter either. Good night!"

"Wait just one minute, Cicely! Come into my room—I won't shut the door!"

"Certainly not!" she said emphatically.

"Well, then, don't speak so loudly! I must confide in you, Cicely; I'm getting desperate. My position is really serious. Something's got to happen! If you would only give me your sympathy——"

"I thought you were writing," she interrupted.

"I've been trying to, but——"

"Well, write all this down and read it to me to-morrow," she smiled. "Good night!"

"The blame be on your head!" began the author dramatically, but the slim figure was already moving away, throwing him a parting smile that seemed to wound his sensitive soul afresh.

## CHAPTER XI.

### NEWS.

Even in that scattered countryside, with scarcely ever a village as a focus for gossip, news flew fast. The next morning Ned Cromarty had set out with his gun toward a certain snipe



marsh, but while he was still on the high road he met a man on a bicycle. The man had heard strange news and stopped to pass it on, and the next moment Ned was hurrying as fast as his long legs could take him back to the castle.

He saw his sister only for a moment. "Lilian!" he cried; and the sound of his voice made her start and stare at him. "There's a story that Sir Reginald was murdered last night."

"Murdered?" she repeated in a low, incredulous voice. "Ridiculous, Ned! Who told you?"

"I know the man only by sight, but he seemed to believe it right enough."

"But how—who did it?"

Her brother shook his head.

"Don't know. He couldn't tell me. My God, I hope it's not true! I'm off to see."

A few minutes later he was driving his mare headlong for his kinsman's house. It had begun to rain by this time, and the mournful wreaths of vapor that swept over the bare, late autumnal country, and drove in fine drops against his face, sent his spirits down ever lower as the mare splashed her way along the empty miles of road. The melancholy thrumming of the telegraph wires droned by his side all the while, and as this dirge waxed for the moment, as they passed each post, his eye would glance grimly at those gaunt poles. Very suitable and handy for a certain purpose, they struck him—if by any possibility this tale were true.

He knew the worst when he saw Bisset at the door.

"Thank God, you've come, sir," said the butler devoutly. "The master would have expected it of you."

"How did it happen? What does it mean? Do you mean to say it's actually true?"

Bisset shook his head somberly.

"Ower true," said he. "But as to

how it happened! Come into the library, sir. It was in his ain library he was killed! The fiscal and superintendent is there now and we've been going into the circumstantial evidence. Most extraordinary mystery, sir—most extraordinary!"

In the library they found Simon Rattar and Superintendent Sutherland. The superintendent was a big, burly red-mustached man; his face a certificate of honesty, but hardly of the intellectual type. Ned looked round him apprehensively for something else, but Bisset said:

"We've taken him upstairs, sir."

For a moment, as he looked round that spacious, comfortable room with its long bookcases and easy-chairs, and on the tables and mantelpiece, a hundred little mementos of its late owner, the laird of Stanesland was unable to speak a word, and the others respected his silence. Then he pulled himself together sharply and asked:

"How did it happen? Tell me all about it!"

Perhaps there might have been for a moment in Simon's eye a hint that this demand was irregular, but the superintendent evidently took no exception to the intrusion. Besides being a considerable local magnate and a kinsman of the dead baronet, Stanesland had a forcible personality that stood no gainsaying.

"Well, sir," said the superintendent, "Mr. Rattar could perhaps explain best——"

"Explain yourself, Sutherland," said Simon briefly.

The superintendent pointed to a spot on the carpet a few paces from the door.

"We found Sir Reginald lying there," he said. "His skull had been fairly cracked, just over the right eye, sir. The blow would have been enough to kill him, I'd think myself, but there were marks in his neck too, seeming

to show that the murderer had strangled him afterward to make sure. However, we'll be having the medical evidence soon. But there's no doubt that was the way of it, and Mr. Rattar agrees with me."

The lawyer merely nodded.

"What was it done with?"

The superintendent pursed his lips and shook his head.

"That's one of the mysterious things in the case, sir. There's no sign of any weapon in the room. The fire irons are far too light. But it was an unco' heavy blow. There was little bleeding, but the skull was fair cracked."

"Was anything stolen?"

"That's another mystery, sir. Nothing was stolen anywhere in the house and there was no papers in a mess like, or anything."

"When was he found?" asked Ned.

"Seven-fifty this morning, sir," said Bisset. "The housemaid finding the door lockit, came to me. I knew the dining-room key fitted this door, too, so I opened it—and there he lay."

"All night, without any one knowing he hadn't gone to bed?"

"That's the unfortunate thing, sir," said the superintendent. "It seems that Sir Reginald had arranged to sleep in his dressing room as he was going to be sitting up late reading."

"Murderer must have known that," put in Simon.

"Almost looks like it," agreed the superintendent.

"And nobody in the house heard or saw anything?"

"Nobody, sir," said the superintendent.

"That's their statement," added the lawyer in his driest voice.

"Was anybody sitting up late?"

"Nobody admits it," said the lawyer, again very dryly.

"Thirteen," said Bisset softly.

They turned toward him, but it seemed that he was talking to himself.

He was, in fact, quietly taking measurements with a tape.

"Go on," said Cromarty briefly.

"Well, sir," said the superintendent, "the body was found near the door, as I was pointing out, but it's a funny thing that a small table had been upset apparently, and Bisset tells us that that table stood near the window."

"Humph," grunted Simon skeptically.

"I'm quite sure of it, Mr. Rattar," said Bisset confidently, looking round from his work of measurement.

"No positive proof it was upset," said the lawyer.

"Did you find it upset?" asked Ned.

The lawyer shook his head emphatically and significantly, and the superintendent agreed.

"No, it was standing just where it is now near the wall."

"Then why do you think it was upset?"

"I picked up yon bits of sealing wax and yon pieces of India rubber," said Bisset, looking round again. "I know they were on the wee table yesterday and I found them under the curtain in the morning and the table moved over to the wall. It follows that the table has been cowpit and then set up again in another place, and the other things on it put back. Is that not a fair deduction, sir?"

Ned nodded thoughtfully.

"Seems to me so," he said.

"It seems likely enough," the superintendent also agreed. "And if that's the case, there would seem to have been some kind of ongoing near the window."

The procurator fiscal still seemed unconvinced.

"Nothing to go on. No proper evidence. It leads nowhere definitely," he said.

"Well, now," continued the superintendent, "the question is—how did the murderer get into the room? The door

was found locked and the key had been taken away, so whether he had locked it from the inside or the outside we can't tell. There's small chance of finding the key, I doubt, for a key's a thing easy hidden away."

"So he might have come in by the door and then left by the door and locked it after him," said Ned. "Or he might have come in by the window, locked the door and gone out by the window. Or he might have come in by the window and gone out by the door, locking it after him. Those are all the chances, aren't they?"

"Indeed, that seems to be them all," said the superintendent with a note of admiration for this clear exposition that seemed to indicate he was better himself at details than at deductions.

"And now what about the window? Was that open or shut or what?"

"Shut but not snibbed, sir."

Ned turned to Bisset.

"Did Sir Reginald ever forget to snib the windows, supposing one happened to be open?"

"Practically never, sir."

"Last thing before he left the room, I suppose?" said the lawyer.

The butler hesitated.

"I suppose so, sir," he admitted, "but of course, I was never here to see."

"Exactly!" said Simon. "Therefore one can draw no conclusions as to whether the window had been standing all the time just as it is now, or whether it had been opened and shut again from the outside; seeing that Sir Reginald was presumably killed before his usual time for looking to the windows."

"Wait a bit!" said Ned. "I was assuming a window had been open. But were the windows fastened before Sir Reginald came in to sit here last thing?"

"Certainly they were that," said the butler emphatically.

"It was a mild night, he might have opened one himself," replied the procurator fiscal. "Or supposing the man had come in and left again by the door, what's more likely than that he un-snibbed the window to make people think he had come that way?"

"He would surely have left it wide open," objected Ned.

"Might have thought that too obvious," replied the lawyer, "or might have been afraid of the noise. Un-snibbing would be quite enough to suggest entry that way."

Ned turned his keen eye hard on him.

"What's your own theory then?"

"I've none," grunted Simon. "No definite evidence one way or the other. Mere guesses are no use."

Ned walked to the window and looked at it carefully. Then he threw it up and looked out into the garden.

"Of course you've looked for footprints underneath?" he asked.

"Naturally," said Simon. "But it's a hard gravel path and grass beyond. One could fancy one saw traces, but no definite evidence."

The window was one of three together, with stone mullions between. They were long windows, reaching down nearly to the level of the floor, so that entrance that way was extremely easy if one of them were open. Cromarty got out and stood on the sill examining the middle sash.

Simon regarded him with a curious, caustic look for a moment in his eye.

"Looking for finger marks?" he inquired.

"Yes," said Ned. "Did you look for them?"

For a single instant the procurator fiscal seemed a little taken aback. Then he grunted with a half laugh:

"Don't believe much in them."

"Experienced criminals, that's been convicted before, frequently wear gloves for to prevent their finger prints being spotted," said the learned Bisset.

Mr. Rattar shot him a quick, ambiguous glance, and then his eyes assumed their ordinary cold look and he said:

"No evidence anybody ever opened that window from the outside. If they had, Sir Reginald would have heard them."

"Well," said Ned, getting back into the room, "there are no finger marks anyhow."

"The body being found near the door certainly seems to be in favor of Mr. Rattar's opinion," observed the superintendent.

"I thought Mr. Rattar had formed no opinion yet," said Cromarty.

"No more I have," grunted the lawyer.

The superintendent looked a trifle perplexed.

"Before Mr. Cromarty had come in, sir, I understood you for to say everything pointed to the man having come in by the door and hit Sir Reginald on the head as he came to see who it was when he heard him outside."

"I merely suggested that," said Simon rather sharply. "It fits the facts, but there's no definite evidence yet."

Ned Cromarty had turned and was frowning out of the window. Now he wheeled quickly and exclaimed:

"If the murderer came in through the window while Sir Reginald was in the room, either the window was standing open or Sir Reginald opened it for him! Did Sir Reginald ever sit with his window open late at night at this time of year?"

"Never once, sir," said Bisset confidently. "He liki't fresh air outside fine but never kept his windies open much unless the weather was vera propitious."

"Then," said Ned, "why should Sir Reginald have opened the window of

his own accord to a stranger at the dead of night?"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Rattar. "Thing seems absurd. He'd never do it."

"That's my own opinion likewise, sir," put in Bisset.

"Then how came the window to be unfastened?" demanded Ned.

"I've suggested a reason," said Simon.

"As a blind? Sounds damned thin."

Simon Rattar turned away from him with an air that suggested that he thought it time to indicate distinctly that he was in charge of the case and not the laird of Stanesland.

"That's all we can do just now, Sutherland," he said. "No use disturbing the household any longer at present."

Cromarty stepped up to him.

"Tell me honestly! Do you suspect anybody?" he asked.

Simon shook his head decidedly.

"No sufficient evidence yet. Good morning, Mr. Cromarty."

Ned was following him to the door, when Bisset beckoned him back.

"Excuse me, sir," said he, "but could you not manage just to stop on for a wee bit yet?"

"They won't be wanting visitors, Bisset."

"They needn't know if you don't want them to, sir. Lady Cromarty is shut up in her room, and the others are keeping out of the way. If you wouldn't mind my giving you a little cold luncheon in my sitting room, sir, I'd like to have your help. I'm making a few sma' bits of investigation 'on my own.' You're one of the family, sir, and I know you'll be wanting to find out who killed the master."

Ned's eye flashed suddenly.

"By God, I'll never rest in this world or the next till I do! All right, I'll wait for a bit."



George had not kissed—really *kissed* her—for three years.

# A Foolish Little Woman

By Winifred Arnold

Author of "The Return," "A Small-Town Adonis," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

**A story of married life. How a foolish young woman became a wise one.**

**E**MILY BROWN was a foolish little woman. There's no blinking the fact; and for the matter of that, nobody seemed to try to blink it—least of all Emily herself. How could she, when it was her George's pet phrase during the honeymoon period; and now, ten years later, was still his pet phrase—with the redeeming "little" left out, and oh, such a difference in the intonation!

And anyway, if she had not been a foolish little woman, there would have been no story. To begin with, she

would never have allowed such a rosy haze to float between her typewriter and common-place George Brown in the outer office, that life with him in a little apartment on St. Christopher Avenue would look like a foretaste of Heaven on a diet of angel food, and, consequently, ten years later, when the rosy haze had drifted away into the stuff that dreams are made of, she would not have been suffering from a chronic heartache over the resultant grayness.

For, being a foolish little woman,

Emily Brown did not know that day by day, married life, instead of being angel food pure and simple, is more like plain bread, the "staff of life" doubtless, and a thing that men and women are willing to work for even at the sweat of their brows, but, for all that, decidedly tiresome for an unrelieved diet, and more than a little prone to become stale—unless one partner or the other sees to its constant freshening.

On the day, however, that this story begins, little Emily Brown had almost forgotten that her bread had ever thought of calling itself angel food, and knew only that it had grown incredibly stale.

George's chosen vis-à-vis at breakfast was his newspaper; his favorite amusement for the evening was removing his collar, changing into slippers, lighting a cigar and slumping into a morris chair, with another newspaper. His only subjects of conversation were food and bills. George had not kissed—really *kissed* her—for three years, since the time when she came from the hospital after her operation.

Just the moment this, then, for the appearance of that gentleman who is supposed to have a proprietary interest in "idle hands," but who is really more concerned with half-occupied hearts and minds. His entrance into the little apartment on St. Christopher Avenue was effected under the sheltering wing of Miss Tillie Symonds, Emily's best friend.

"It's only Tillie," bubbled that young lady's voice up the speaking tube, with unintentional lack of veracity; and then, prancing upstairs in an incredibly short time, she presented a flushed and smiling countenance.

"Well, hello, little one," she gushed, swooping down upon little Mrs. Brown with an ardent embrace. "So glad to find you in, sweetie!"

But Mrs. Brown held her off suspiciously. "Tillie!" she cried, waving an

accusing forefinger in that sprightly young lady's face. "You've been up to something again. You can't fool me. What is it?"

Tillie giggled.

"What is it?" repeated Mrs. Brown, with a little shake.

Tillie giggled again. "Well now, Emily! Think you're some Sherlock, don't you?"

"You tell me now, Tillie Symonds!"

Still giggling, with her cheeks growing pinker and pinker, Miss Tillie opened her oversized hand bag, drew out a printed sheet, unfolded it and waved it triumphantly in her friend's face.

"Tillie!" Mrs. Brown's tone was more than scandalized. "That matrimonial paper again! You *haven't* answered any of the advertisements! You promised——"

Even without her little half nod, Miss Tillie's smile would have answered for her. It was so distinctly of the type known as "the cat that has eaten the canary."

"Oh, Tillie! When you promised me—promised—that you wouldn't write to any of those fake wife hunters. Why, it isn't nice, dearie! I wish you'd heard what George said when he picked up that other copy that you left here. Crumpled it up and flung it right into the wastebasket, George did. Said you were absolutely crazy to even read them. Oh, Tillie, he says you won't ever get a good husband that way!"

"Tisn't a husband I want," corrected Miss Symonds with sudden crushing dignity. "George makes me sick! You both know as well as I do that I can marry Jim Painter any minute I say the word. What I want is some fun before I settle down. Something romantic like you see in the movies. Jim's as slow as a church—almost as bad as George. Besides being off on the road most of the time. And his letters to me! My dear, you



could mix up those he sends to me and those to his firm any time and never so much as raise a smile in his office. Now De Lancey, here——"

"De Lancey?"

"Uh-huh. De Lancey Granger. That sounds all right, don't it? Well, he sure can write letters. He's written me all this bunch in a little over a week. I brought——"

"But, Tillie," worried Emily, "you may get into a peck of trouble. Jim would be furious if he knew. And this other man—why, he may sue you for breach of promise or something."

Tillie laughed airily. "Breach of promise nothing! Why to begin with, I didn't choose an 'Object Matrimony' one. There are three or four there that say 'for fun and what may come of it.' And I put it to him straight that fun was all I wanted. Besides Emily, you little goose, you don't suppose I gave my real name and address, do you? Miss Lillian La Rue at your service, and a box at the post office, same as Mary and I have for the mail-order beauty business."

There are advantages after all in being a foolish little woman. Your friends may not take your advice, but they do not on that account, hesitate to confide in you.

Miss Symonds departed abruptly a few minutes later, in order to avoid meeting Mr. George Brown whom she cordially detested, but she left behind her in the back of Mrs. Brown's linen drawer, the paper

with its alluring advertisement and the resulting bunch of letters.

"They'll be safer here than they are in my bag, anyway," explained Tillie. "Jim's in town and we'll probably go somewhere to-night, and sometimes he likes to fool around with my things—makes him feel married, he says. Not that I don't think I'm perfectly justified in getting a little fun on the side, just as you would be, married to such a lump as George Brown; but then——"

It happened that this was one of George's lodge nights, and for once Emily was willing, nay eager, to have him go. No fear of a lonesome, sleepy evening with not even a smoky newspaper to talk to, while Romance was waiting imprisoned

in her own buffet drawer! She even forgot to present her check for George's unexciting kiss—though neither of them noticed this until the



And then the answer came back—the wonderful, thrilling answer!

time, weeks later, when they both began to notice everything.

But I must not anticipate. To-night Emily walked vicariously in the fields of romance with De Lancey Granger whose letters had a sincere boyish ring about them which thrilled the guilelessly eavesdropping Emily to the soul.

"Little Pal" he called Tillie from the first, and "Little Pal" was the keynote of his letters. How strange it seemed that a man who could write like that should have nobody of his own to write to—should have to advertise! And how lucky Tillie was to have struck an adventure like that—such an innocent, harmless, delightful adventure! What was his advertisement like, she wondered—and turned toward the little printed sheet.

There was no marked paragraph, as she had expected, so she had to run through them all. It was a revelation. So many attractive people in the world sending up their little kites in search of the electric thrill of happiness! And of them all, the most attractive—

"You didn't tell me which advertisement was De Lancey Granger's, Tillie," said Emily the next day, returning the missives, "but I knew, of course, that it must be the one from the lonely Westerner on a ranch, with only the sweet memory—"

"Which one?" demanded Tillie, snatching at the paper. "*That?* No indeed! De Lancey's said—why this isn't the right paper at all. This is this week's. De Lancey's was in pretty nearly a month ago. That does sound nice, though. Sort of poetic. If I hadn't begun on De Lancey, I don't know— Say, Emily, why don't you write to him yourself? You could have it sent to my box—"

Emily, of course, scorned the idea in the most virtuous and decisive fashion. But being, as I said, a foolish little woman, she did not refuse to look again at the paper which Miss Tillie quite ac-

cidentally, of course, left behind her. And in less than an hour, a letter such as Emily might have written if she had been going to write, which of course she wasn't, had been pounded out on her old-fashioned Blickensderfer. This letter was signed, after some thought, "Geraldine Guinevere Chichester." If your name were Emily Jane Brown, née Jenkins, you might welcome the chance to bloom out, too!

George was particularly trying that night. Perchance, if George had known what hung in the balance he might have behaved differently, but George did not know. As a consequence, he ripped off his collar and tie even before dinner time, growled at the cost of the steak and the way it was cooked, and finally by the time Emily had finished the dishes he had sunk into the sleep of repletion.

One glance at that red and shiny countenance, at those red lips puffing in and out, in and out, with clocklike regularity, and the die was cast. With an unaccustomed set of determination to her own lips, Emily slipped downstairs and mailed her letter to that lonely Westerner who sat watching the stars from his cabin window.

Of course, you are perfectly shocked at Emily who is now more than foolish! *You* would never have done that! To be sure. But then, your George would never have behaved that way in the matter of collars and stocking feet. If he had, you would probably have divorced him.

However, Emily wouldn't have cared a snap about your opinion, anyway. For the first few days her whole mind was concentrated on wondering why she had been such a perfect little fool and on what George would say if he found out and on what awful thing would happen to her as a result.

And then all thought of George or consequences vanished, for the answer came back! The wonderful, thrilling

answer contained the gratifying information that the lonely Westerner's name was Cyril Daubigny, that he was the unfortunate younger son of a great English family, and that for some sad and mysterious reason he could never hope to marry, though of his longing for feminine friendship no tongue could tell.

"I'll bet anything he's got an insane wife like Rochester," commented Miss Tillie Symonds, who had recently seen a screen version of *Jane Eyre*. "But now don't you go to spoiling everything by telling him you're married yourself, Emily. In your first, you said you weren't looking for that, and that's enough. You notice that he doesn't give any address—just care of the *Helping Hand*, same as before. Just answer the poetry part of his letter and let the facts go for a while."

Not because she was wise—for she was, as you were thinking, an even more foolish little woman than before—but because the "poetry part" was what she was starving for, Emily accepted this sound advice, and threw herself heart and soul into this delightful, romantic adventure!

It was delicious—the day of the rosy haze and the angel food all over again—and nothing mundane mattered. In the golden glow that the radiant Cyril cast over her life she lived and moved and had her being. For Cyril, *in absentia*, she concocted hats and gowns and fluffy coiffures, to the cheerful neglect of George, present in the flesh.

And George of course—such is the irony of Fate!—became more and more agreeable, the less he was pampered. Maybe there's more truth to that theory about a woman's aim than we women are willing to admit.

Then suddenly one day Emily's conscience, hitherto sleeping so peacefully, woke up and discovered with dismay how agreeable its slumber had unintentionally been making life for everybody.

"Why, this will never do!" muttered the Conscience, shaking itself like a giant refreshed by sleep. Forthwith plunging its hooks once more into the happy Emily, it dragged her away to the little back room where Miss Symonds and her friend May were wrapping up ten cents' worth of literature and cold cream and mailing them to the country districts at one dollar per.

"Oh, Tillie," groaned little Mrs. Brown. "My conscience is troubling me *so*! George is really such a good husband, even though I don't love him as I used to. Twice lately he has taken me to the movies. And he's lots more careful about his collar and things. And yesterday he brought me home a new flour-sifter. It must have cost a lot for it won't sift a bit. And to-day a bunch of carnations!" Here she broke down and wept. "And I'm deceiving him so dreadfully! Tillie, do you think I ought to give up Cyril? Or anyway, tell George?"

Miss Symonds sniffed unsympathetically. "Better be sure first that there's any Cyril to give up," she said. "Just let me tell you the jolt that was handed to me this morning. As soon as May and I got through I was coming up to your house. You know Jim's in town again. Well, some way or other he got hold of some of the facts about the *Helping Hand*.

"Well of course, I owned up. I've always said that that was strictly my own affair. But naturally I draw the line at giving De Lancey Granger's address to Jim, so he could go and kill him. In the middle of the night, though, I got into a panic. Suppose Jim should go down to the *Helping Hand* office and get the address from there. I could hardly wait to swallow my breakfast, believe me, before off I posted. And they had the laugh on me down there, all right, when I pounced in, all in a fever!

"It seems that a woman authoress up



There could no longer be any doubt.  
It was George!

(Edith Brown)

town put in that ad so's to get what they call 'local color' for a novel. And she liked my letters so much that she kept on, and she's going to publish 'em in a book like 'Dere Mable!' Not much she ain't! My letters!"

"And you think that Cyril——"

"Ayah. Probably nothing but a sell, too. May knows a girl that answered an 'Object Matrimony' named Courtney Leigh, and it turned out to be a married man and she got into an awful mix-up with his wife."

"Oh, but Cyril! I know that Cyril——"

"You don't know anything about any fellow named Cyril or De Lancey or Courtney Leigh. They sound fishy just as they stand. And you know it. Just like Geraldine Guinevere and Lillian La Rue. That's the best thing about George. Brown—his name sounds solid."

"Oh, solid!" moaned Mrs. George Brown, disgustedly. "If that's all you want. But Cyril—I can't believe there isn't any Cyril. I must go home and write to him and find out."

"Better go down to the *Helping Hand* and see if he isn't a fluffy blond

typewriter," suggested Miss Tillie cynically.

"Oh, no, no! He isn't, I know he isn't. I—I'll ask him to come and see me. Then I'll know."

Again the answer came back with gratifying promptness—considering the remoteness of Cyril's Western home. Of course there was a real Cyril Daubigny, stated the letter unequivocally. And surely he was coming to New York some time. By rare good fortune he was at this very moment speeding his way eastward and panting to make Geraldine Guinevere's acquaintance. Would she drop him a line to the general delivery in New York, to tell him when and where to meet her?

Promptly upon receipt of this letter, little Mrs. Brown repaired to the upper part of Central Park, picked out a seat surrounded by huge bushes and describing it as accurately as she could, bade "Cyril" present himself there at one o'clock on the following Thursday, with a pink carnation in his button-hole. She hesitated a bit over the carnation, but after all, what harm? Of course there was that good-looking photograph now enshrined in the linen drawer. But if perchance Cyril should have discarded his Stetson for a top hat as the English nobility were prone to do, his features might not seem to resemble William Hart's so closely, and then—no, the pink carnation would be safer.

For the next two days she lived in a panic. Suppose Cyril should not come—or it should rain—or he should turn out a frightful disappointment—or George should decide to come home to lunch! He did sometimes. Or—oh horrible and paralyzing thought!—suppose George had discovered all about Cyril and should come to the park and shoot him before her very eyes!

A hundred times she wished that she had never asked Cyril to come, that she had never written to him at all. A

hundred times she decided that she would not go. Supposing, just supposing George found out!

At twelve o'clock, however, curiosity triumphed and she decided for the last time that she would go. What harm could it do when she had never intended to speak to Cyril or even let him see her, but just to stand behind one of those bushes—in radiant new hat and gown to be sure—but quite out of sight?

At quarter to one precisely, she took up her stand behind the thickest and tallest bush, and from this vantage point proceeded to view the landscape. Not a person in sight.

She waited two minutes, then peered again. Still no one in sight. Cyril evidently was the very punctual kind, like George. Not the ardent being, palpitating with impatience, of whom she had dreamed.

But wait! What was that? Behind the bush opposite— Yes, there was some one—a man—hiding there. Could it be that Cyril like herself— But no, this man was wearing a derby—a brown derby—like George. He was short too, nowhere near six feet as Cyril had said *he* was. And that coat! It made her think of the new light overcoat that George had so proudly worn home the night before. Or was it just her guilty conscience deceiving her?

Just then the man turned and cleared his throat with a little hawking sound that she had always hated in George. There could no longer be any doubt. *It was George!*

With a swift, icy certainty her fears of the morning came back to her. George had heard about Cyril in some mysterious way—like Jim—and he had come to fight Cyril—to kill Cyril—suddenly the absurdity of the thought overcame her. Why, Cyril was over six feet tall and probably armed to the teeth, while George—George could reach to five feet seven by stretching,

but as to shooting—she remembered that time he had tried to shoot the squirrel and giggled hysterically.

The icy hand clutched her throat again. *It was Cyril who would kill George!* But he mustn't kill George! She was so used to George!

With a smothered little scream she started forward.

"George!" she shrilled in a queer, unrecognizable voice.

"George!" Her knees trembled so that she could hardly stand.

With a sudden awkward dash, George ran toward her, seized her hand.

"Why, Em," he gasped. "Em! Why — How did you come here?"

But still Emily could scarcely speak.

"Come!" she whispered chokingly. "Come." She led the way to another seat, not very far away, but well out of sight of the other.

"Oh George," she whispered again. "George! You—you mustn't."

But George was not listening to her. "You—you musn't misunderstand Em," he stammered. "It was never anything serious. I—I wasn't going to speak to her—or anything. Just to see what she was like. It—it just started as a joke. You remember that fool paper Tillie left, the one I threw in the basket. Well, I took it out afterward and looked it over. And by and by I thought I'd just try my luck—for fun, so I advertised—and she answered. A woman's different o' course—but a fellow needs a little romance and poetry in his life once in a while, even if he is married; and in the movies of course, it's Westerners. My ad was some peach—"

He smiled fatuously, and then, goaded by her silence, plunged guiltily on.

"But lately you've seemed so different some ways. I—I—got kind of sick of it. But of course, when she wrote

and wanted to see me so bad, I—why o' course I had to do something—I couldn't let a lady—But I wasn't going to speak to her, Em, honest I wasn't."

Helplessly he pulled out his handkerchief and mopped his red, perspiring forehead.

During this speech, remorse, contrition, confession had trembled upon the tip of Emily's tongue.

"Oh, George," she began breathlessly when he ended. Then she stopped, looking down at a little object that she had suddenly noticed on the path.

"Not," she went on after a moment, "until you saw whether you liked the looks of Geraldine Guinevere, George?"

George stopped his brow-mopping to stare at his spouse.

"Geraldine Guin—" he stammered. "Emily you're sure a little wonder, all right. Where in thunder? Did I ever bring a letter home? I could have sworn—"

Emily rose and shook her head with a smile. "No—Cyril," she said distinctly. "But you'd better pick that up and bring it along now, I think." She pointed to the incriminating pale pink carnation which lay at George's feet. "You might need it next time, you know."

"There won't be any next time!" exploded George. "They charge too darned much for their letters down there at that *Helping Hand* place! And besides, I've felt lately just like a yellow dog. When a man's got a pretty, smart, little girl like you, Em— Say, Em, go on and tell me, how did you find out?"

"I will tell you that," answered Emily Brown with a cryptic smile, "when there are no more pink carnations in the market," an answer, so some people at least would think, which marked the decisive step in Emily Brown's evolution from a Foolish Little Woman into a Wise One.





# Clothes *and* the Man

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "Her Own Price," "The Precious Hour," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

**In which Captain Bruce Henderson learns something about women and the comparatively unimportant subject of masculine attire.**

THEY say Bruce Henderson seemed inclined to take life cheerfully enough until they tried to put clothes on him. Then he howled a protest that would have downed anything less inevitable and inexorable than clothes. There is absolutely no use in trying to get away from clothes, and although Bruce warred against them vociferously for some eight or ten years, he was at last obliged to come to a sort of grudging truce with them. A strange boy was Bruce, not averse to water and actually washing behind his ears of his own accord, but shying at a necktie like a skittish colt at a Sunday supplement.

At a certain age, Bruce did buy an orange shirt, but that was his whole concession. He was personable enough as to face and figure, but he couldn't seem to take in the importance of clothes. He always bought them ready-made, and if they weren't too large they were too small. As for color and cut, he was serenely indifferent to both, sometimes, in the winter, resembling a colored minstrel, and in the summer looking like an undertaker. Anyway, he was always comfortable, you may be sure; no tight shoes nor high collars for Bruce.

Perhaps you may infer that poor Bruce was not a ladies' man. He was inclined to be shy with them; they were inclined to patronize him, even when not pointedly turning up their noses. Of course he didn't understand why. He didn't see that what made Joan Ellery a delight to his eyes was quite as much her neat, smart, careful clothes as her merry eyes and sweet lips and fresh skin and bright hair. And then she was so kind. She did not make excuses to get away when he sat awkwardly beside her at church "sociables." She seemed really to like to talk to him. In short, she did not seem to see any difference between him and the other boys. The secret of that was that Joan kept her bright eyes on his good brown face instead of on his atrocious tie.

They were friends. She went riding with him in a one-lunged Ford, and never let on that on Sunday night he had called on her without a collar. Her eyes were only extra merry.

By profession, Bruce was an engineer, and he looked his best in the field, in flannel shirt and corduroys. Yes, Bruce was a man's man; and the man's sister was likely to epilogue his introduction with comments like this: "For

heaven's sake, Tom, don't bring that object home again when anybody's here! Where on earth does he *find* such clothes? I didn't suppose they were made outside a comic costumer's. And to have to introduce him to Lillian Kennedy! I was so mortified!"

"Look here, Bruce is a good fellow, Fan," Tom would say. "Worth a dozen snips like your friend fashion-plate, Reggie Platt. I guess he's color-blind or something. Poor 'chap hasn't any ear for duds," he would finish grinning.

"Ear!" giggled Fanny. "He'd have to be stone deaf to stand the noise of that suit he had on. But now really, Tom, I'm serious. It's embarrassing!"

So the next time, poor Bruce wouldn't be invited "out to the house." And he would be disappointed because he had admired Fan immensely.

There was no use trying to deceive himself, he wasn't popular with the girls. He didn't see why. Not, of course, that he gave a darn. It wasn't any sign of superiority to have a lot of girls stringing you along. Be a man's man, that's the real test.

Only Joan continued to be gracious and friendly, and he was grateful. But perhaps, such are human quirks, he wondered whether *she* couldn't get any one else.

And then along came the war. Bruce promptly entered an officers' training-camp, captured a first lieutenantcy and, naturally, *wore a uniform*.

He had gone to this ball with some brother officers, had trailed along, indeed, with the humility he had been taught in the presence of ladies. He'd slip away early—

"Miss Brown, may I present Lieutenant Henderson?" He bowed, she beamed, *so* beamingly that he almost jumped.

"Shall we dance?" he asked diffidently. To his further surprise she

gleefully assented. He didn't dance very well, but she didn't say she was tired and suggest sitting it out, as he expected. Instead—

"Oh, Lieutenant Henderson, won't you come and see us? Mother would be *delighted*. You boys are *so* wonderful. Could you come to dinner? *Would* you? Oh, do." The wondering Bruce murmured that he would be only too glad to accept her kind invitation.

*Might* she introduce him to her dearest friend? Certainly, delighted.

"Oh, Gracie, I want you to meet Lieutenant Henderson! He knows *all* about bridges. So interesting. Oh, I forgot, Miss Birdwell, Lieutenant Henderson."

Lieutenant Henderson, pink with the novelty of this enthusiasm, exerted himself to be agreeable, and was amazed at his obvious success. He danced every dance with never a reluctant partner. Every damsel smiled her sweetest upon him. Was it because he was a soldier for whom now there were the kindest eyes and lips? The first half of the evening he suspected it, the last half he realized that *these* girls knew a man when they saw him. Back home in a little town like Sandy Center, the girls only liked sissies. Now, in *cities*—

Thus, Lieutenant Henderson came into what he, much elated, considered his own. He no longer received Joan's letters with secret pride and gratitude. He took them up nonchalantly along with notes from Miss Brown and Miss Birdwell, and invitations to various festivities where Lieutenant Henderson would not be a wallflower.

It was at a certain dinner dance to which he had escorted Miss Birdwell that he met Alicia Covington. Alicia was tall, blond, statuesque, with a high-born air that imparted something especially flattering to her graciousness.

"Of course," a Captain Potts was saying, "I don't try to differentiate too closely between my own charms and those of my uniform. I'll tell you I'm

grateful to my khaki. It makes bright eyes kinder to me than ever before."

"It's certainly becoming," agreed Miss Birdwell. "Seems to turn every ordinary-looking boy into a regular Adonis."

"I know only one fellow who isn't happy in khaki," laughed the captain. "He's so bowlegged he used to wear these forms on the inside of his knees. You've seen them advertised. He can't wear them with puttees and all his lady friends are scandalized. He's really unhappy about it!"

"Women have always been accused of loving a uniform," Miss Covington observed. "But don't you think that's because we admire the *brave* so much?"

"And naturally, since none but the brave deserve the fair, you want to be sure you're favoring the deserving! Is that it?"

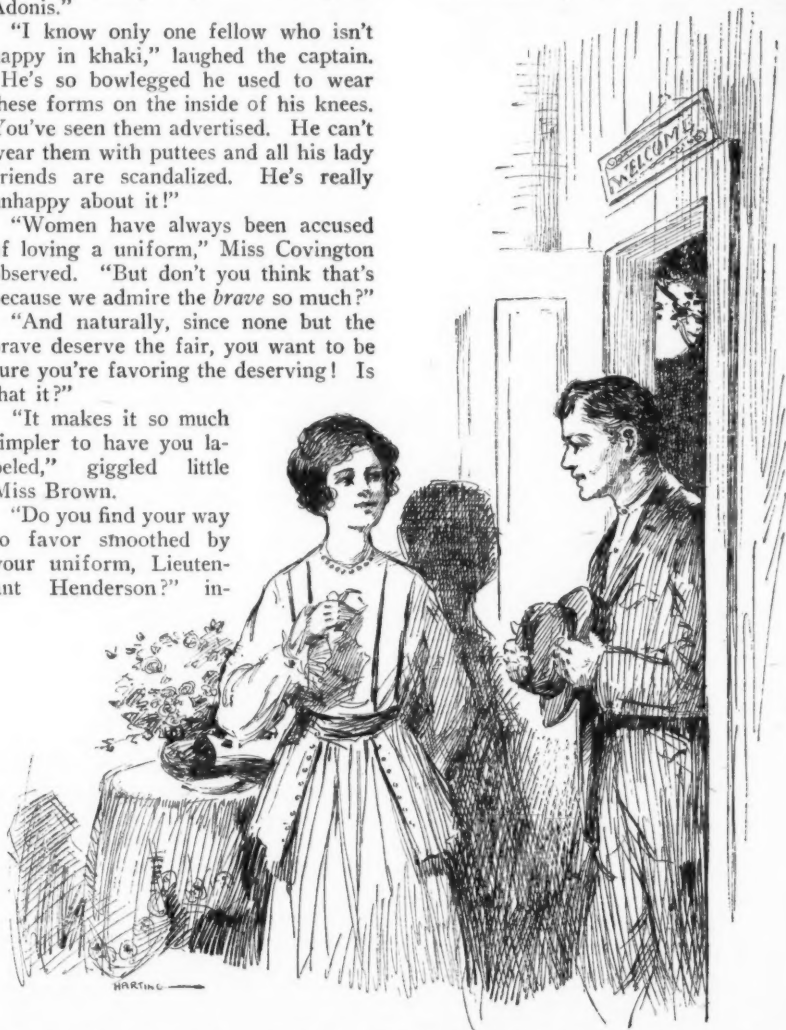
"It makes it so much simpler to have you labeled," giggled little Miss Brown.

"Do you find your way to favor smoothed by your uniform, Lieutenant Henderson?" in-

quired Miss Covington, with a slightly coquettish inflection.

"I know it is my only charm," he returned, growing pink.

"With them eyes? Oh, no," scoffed



She never let on that on Sunday night he had called on her without a collar. Her eyes were only extra merry.

the captain, who would have liked to sit beside the fair Alicia himself.

"I have discovered a modest man!" cried Alicia.

"There ain't no such animal," quoted the sage Gracie.

"You've heard of the right of discovery, haven't you?" murmured Bruce, surprised at his inspiration.

"Be careful or I shall claim it." Her glance was intoxicating.

"Do," he sighed.

She replied only with a smile, but Bruce's subjugation was already complete. To be noticed by Miss Covington was far headier than champagne. All evening he danced attendance upon her, begged, and was granted permission to call, and parted from the pouting Gracie in an absent-minded glory of anticipation.

And for once, reality exceeded expectation. The blond Alicia was beautiful beyond belief, kind beyond dreams. Big Bruce, in his well-fitting uniform, with adoration in his fine eyes, was not at all displeasing to Alicia either. Besides, Alicia was twenty-eight and a mite too tall, while Gracie Birdwell was little and only twenty-one.

It was an affair that went forward rapidly. The moment he was free Bruce flew to Alicia and she trailed him around before all her aristocratic friends and to all the benefits and committee luncheons to which she condescended to go. His devotion was incense to her, and she hadn't the slightest idea how extremely flattering her mere acquaintance was to him!

He still kept up a more or less spasmodic correspondence with Joan, toward whom he was beginning to feel a slight condescension. It was kindly patronage though, for, poor girl, if Alicia found him attractive, how must a quiet little girl like Joan have looked upon him! He did not tell her of Alicia—he could at least spare her that.

She wrote him friendly letters be-

ginning: "Dear Bruce," and knitted him a sweater, and a helmet and wristlets and socks. Poor girl!

He thought with a twinge of conscience of the night he had come away. He and Joan stood at the gate. They had walked in silence through the garden, sweet with jasmine and honeysuckle. A pale moon, low above the little river, cast a magic light upon the face of Joan and made her beautiful. He did not know that it also dimmed the radiance of his cerise tie.

"Think," Joan had said, "this moon shines on the battlefields of France, too! I wonder if you'll think of old Sandy when you're there?"

"Think of it! Why, I bet on nights like this it'll hang before me just like a painted picture."

"I wonder. Everything will be so different, Bruce, so new. It'll be easy to forget, I expect."

"Easy!" he had cried reproachfully. It had come to him suddenly how terribly hard it would be really to forget Joan. Her nearness had become suddenly poignantly sweet. Something, tightening in his chest, made his breath come hard. "I—I guess I'll have to go now, Joan. Write often, won't you?"

"Of course, I will. And—good luck, Bruce. You know I—wish you everything good——"

She had put out her hand and he had shaken it awkwardly. Her earnest little face had been so close to his he had wanted to kiss her. He had been afraid—he didn't seem to know how, yet he had wanted to kiss her—— He had dropped her hand and opened the gate.

"Well—good-by, Joan. I—uh—good-by."

"Good-by, Bruce. Good luck."

"Thanks. Good-by."

"Good-by," she had breathed.

He went off down the street with a queer ache in his throat.



"Just say that again," he begged. "Bruce—like that. I never knew it was such a dandy name."

And full upon her rosy lips—he kissed her!

Oh, wistful woman, weary lover,  
To feel again that first wild thrill!

But who can live youth over?

He didn't know he remembered those lines. He wished he *had* kissed her. He knew the rosy lips of Joan would have held as sweet a thrill for him. Why hadn't he kissed her?

That unmissed kiss had haunted his dreams until—straightened out of his slouch by drill, and uniformed in the

nifty khaki of our own United States—he had become an officer and a gentleman, and had been looked upon by the eyes of Alicia Covington. Then Joan had become like the morning star, extinguished by the rising sun.

Lieutenant Henderson stood in Miss Covington's drawing-room on the eve of his sailing for France. If he had had the power of expression, he would doubtless have had a poem in his pocket,

and a headache from a vain search for something to rhyme with "Alicia." As it was, he had in that pocket a sweet letter from Joan which, so delicate were his sensibilities these days, he felt should not be present during this anguished leave-taking from Alicia.

Alicia floated in, looking like an angel—men usually picture angels as blond with gowns by Lucille. Bruce, accustomed to the simple dress of Sandy Center, hadn't got over being dazzled by the luxuriant style of the city.

"To think that you're really going over there," sighed Alicia, giving him both hands, which he had but lately learned how to take. "I'm so proud of you!"

"Are you really? Then I'm the proudest fellow in the army!"

"You do say the nicest things—Bruce." It was the first time she had said "Bruce." He was thrilled.

"Just say that again," he begged.

"What?"

"Bruce—like that. I never knew it was such a dandy name."

She laughed deliciously. "Why don't you ever say 'Alicia'?"

"A-Alicia." He blushed and stammered. He thought it almost rhymed with delicious, thought it might be clever to say "Delicia," remembered just in time that *that* was the ridiculous girl in the comic section. "Alicia!" It tasted like honey in his mouth.

She bade him sit beside her on a velvet divan. She said the whole war was somehow obscured, for her, behind the figure of one man. Perhaps he could guess who that man was. It was such a wonderful war! It made her think of Holy Wars—the Crusades. How the brave girls then sent their knights forth to battle for the right! But perhaps he already wore some one's favor on his helmet?

Indeed, he did not. The only thing he asked of Heaven was that he might be *her* knight. Alicia's knight! Oh,

nothing could withstand him if he might go as Alicia's knight!

If he might! If he *would*!

All he wanted was to be her knight *always*. Was there, could there be a chance for him?

There was. In another minute Bruce Henderson was an engaged man. And this farewell was not kissless!

As soon as the door had closed behind him, Alicia sent a message to the press.

"The engagement is announced of Miss Alicia Covington, daughter of the late Major Covington—Charles Covington, the second—to Lieutenant Bruce Henderson, now en route to France."

Bruce wore her picture over his heart, and sent her a ring from Paris.

He did not write the great news to Joan. Poor girl, he thought, as he put on the socks knitted by her capable hands. He hoped there was no disloyalty to Alicia in his wearing them—they were such dandy socks. And almost every mail, he got a letter from Joan, such homy, cozy, bracing letters. It was all right, everybody ought to write to the soldiers, and then, of course, Joan was an old friend, just an old friend. And he switched his eyes instantly from the mirage of her upturned face, moon-magicked into beauty, with its warm, red mouth. "Oh, wistful woman, weary lover—" Ah, but there had been nothing lacking in the touch of Alicia's lips. He had always thought himself such a dub—here, he was quite a devil of a fellow.

To sing of the glory and of the horror of war is not the purpose of this tale. Our hero tasted a little of both. He received a trifling wound, achieved a captaincy and an experience which was romantic in theory, and more or less brutal in practice. In short, his was simply the common lot of war, which includes the face of a woman, haloed by the rising moon or the smoke



of secret camp fires. He conjured only the fair face of his betrothed. He was annoyed that it so often seemed shadowed by the unbidden vision of Joan Ellery.

Joan still knitted his socks. Once he received them in the same mail with a newspaper cut of Alicia, as the fiancée of Captain Bruce Henderson. Joan had evidently seen that, even in Sandy Center, for she wrote, congratulating him, saying that Miss Covington was very lovely. Neither did she ask why he had not told her. There was nothing in the least aggrieved in the whole letter. Wasn't she the game one! She probably didn't care a rap, though. Certainly didn't show the slightest indication of its being anything to her.

Well, even this war ended, as you may have noticed. Captain Henderson, as it chanced, was one of the first to be sent home. And chance or fate had lured Alicia to the bedside of an ancient aunt in Texas, who *might* be leaving her a little money.

By mail, Alicia bewailed her absence, and prayed he would not be mustered out for a while, because she *did so want* the captain to be married in his uniform.

Don't tell me that some wretched little tin god, with his tongue in his cheek, doesn't hold sway over these matters. Bruce was mustered out, laid aside his uniform, and in all serenity renewed his civilian wardrobe in the style to which he was accustomed. Clothes were of no importance to Bruce. They were merely the custom of the country, so he put no thought into the apparel which he was to wear before his lady, and not much money, for one reason, because he hadn't much money. And such was the simple-mindedness of this Bruce that he attached little importance to that, either!

He did not want to greet Alicia before the delegation of friends who

would probably be on hand to meet her, so he went down the line a few stations and waited for her train to come along.

Alicia called "Come" in response to the tap on her drawing-room door, and started in amazement at the figure which straightway appeared in the doorway. A big fellow he was, in an ill-fitting suit of an impossible green. The top button of his waistcoat was unbuttoned, showing, with generosity, a pink-striped shirt, over which flowed a bright orange necktie attached awry to an unfashionable collar. Above smiled expansively the brown face of Captain Bruce Henderson!

Alicia gasped, swallowed hard, and gasped again.

"Honey, don't you know me?" grinned the unconscious horror, using a *bourgeois* endearment.

"Bruce!"

"The same." He gathered her into his arms and imprinted a few kisses on her flabbergasted face.

"I didn't know you," she kept repeating weakly, while he drew her down on the seat beside him.

"A fellow looks different in a uniform, of course," said the fatuous Bruce.

"He does," declared Alicia with sudden and incisive decision. Bruce prattled on, thinking that it was Alicia's surprise and emotion which made her *distract*.

Proudly he convoyed her to her waiting friends, when they left the train. They kissed and exclaimed over Alicia and glanced, with perplexed curiosity, at her radiant companion. Some of them he had met, and these began to murmur in queer, doubtful tones: "Oh, —Captain Henderson—"

By the time they reached home, Alicia seemed on the verge of hysterics. Bruce wondered that the excitement should prove too much for the self-contained Alicia. He had been look-

ing forward to a tête-à-tête, but Alicia, with cavalier disdain, dismissed him.

"I can't talk to you now. I'm tired—some other time—I don't know what to think—I'll let you know——" She left him abruptly.

Much crestfallen he went back to his room and brooded for an hour over this astounding behavior. Then a messenger brought him a note, obviously dashed off in haste and determination.

CAPTAIN HENDERSON: Here is your ring. Our engagement was a mistake. This is final. I am sorry. Please don't try to see me. I wish you well.

ALICIA COVINGTON.

But Bruce was not the kind to accept this unquestioningly. He sprang into a taxi, sped to Alicia, and forced an interview. It was brief, but it achieved a high temperature.

"Well, if you must have it," snapped Miss Covington finally, "I expected you, at least, to look like a gentleman."

Bruce stared.

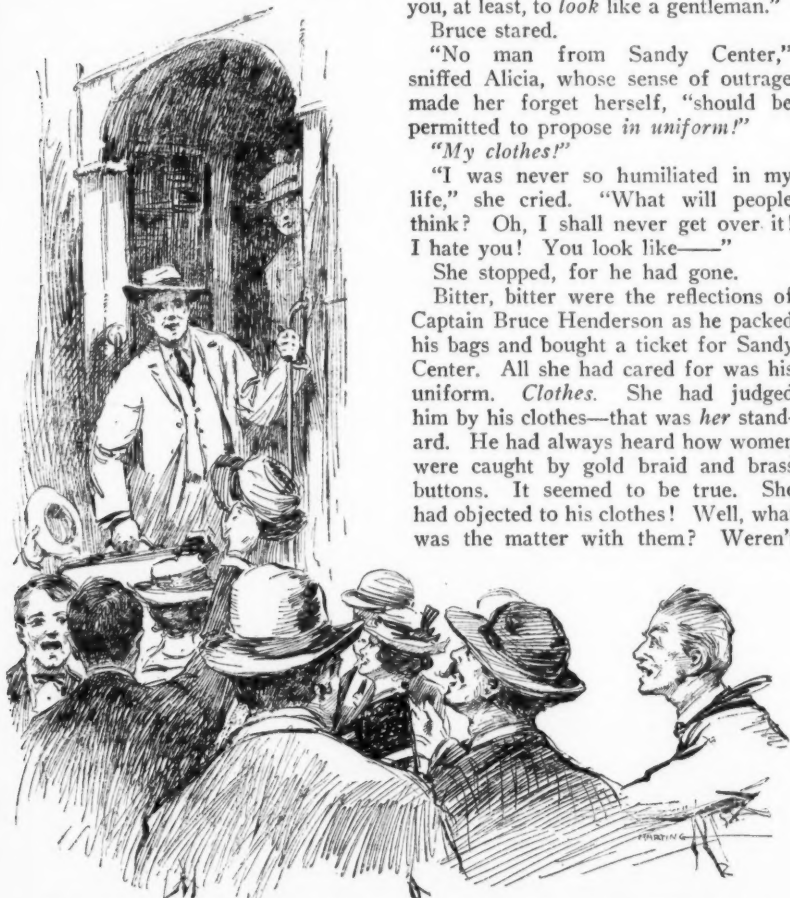
"No man from Sandy Center," sniffed Alicia, whose sense of outrage made her forget herself, "should be permitted to propose in uniform!"

"My clothes!"

"I was never so humiliated in my life," she cried. "What will people think? Oh, I shall never get over it! I hate you! You look like——"

She stopped, for he had gone.

Bitter, bitter were the reflections of Captain Bruce Henderson as he packed his bags and bought a ticket for Sandy Center. All she had cared for was his uniform. *Clothes*. She had judged him by his clothes—that was *her* standard. He had always heard how women were caught by gold braid and brass buttons. It seemed to be true. She had objected to his clothes! Well, what was the matter with them? Weren't



Sandy Center reached for his hand with a whoop of welcome. They knew him all right.

they just like everybody's? Certainly they were.

All Sandy Center reached for his hand with a whoop of welcome. They knew him all right. They didn't have any trouble recognizing him.

"By George, you look natural, Bruce! 'Scuse me, *Captain*. Maybe we ain't glad to see you again! Heard you was wounded. Got a cross! What'd you think of that! Captain, your town's proud of you, by gad, it is! Shake, old boy!"

And so his later wound was somewhat salved, by the time he reached Joan Ellery's door.

"Oh, Bruce, I'm so glad! You're home! You're home again all safe and sound! Oh, my dear, I can't tell you——" Her sweet voice broke.

"Joan, Joan darling," said Bruce huskily, "I've come home to you. I want to stay always, if you'll let me. Will you, Joan, will you?"

"But—but Miss Covington——" whispered Joan, her hands tight in his, perplexed eyes searching his.

"Oh, that's all over. She only cared for my uniform, not me. And it's you I love, Joan. I always did; I just didn't know myself, that's all."

"I've always loved you, Bruce," said Joan simply.

"Thank God! Alicia *didn't* like my clothes," thought Bruce—when he could think.

And, thought Joan, her head pillowed lovingly on the pink shirt: "You're a soldier and a gentleman and a dear—and your little wife will select your clothes for you in the future!"



### "VERS LIBRE"

ONCE my poetry, neat and terse,  
Had a pleasant patter like summer rain,  
Or the soft-hummed song of an infant's nurse,  
Rising, falling to rise again.  
Now you would listen for that in vain  
My lines are rugged and blank and worse—  
*Blankety-blank*—you see, I'm plain—  
For they may be "free," but they are not verse.

Would you know the way of this modern curse?  
Take some language and turn and twist,  
String out your words, or, the reverse,  
Chop them short, for they'll not be missed  
And behold, a thing like a laundry list  
(Though perhaps less hard on the poet's purse)  
Or as rhythmic, say, as a score at whist,  
For it may be "free," but it is *not* verse.

#### ENVOY.

Singing in fashion I must be.  
But think! When I would that the bores disperse,  
I can read aloud from my poesy,  
Which may be "free," but is scarcely verse!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.

# Fresh Air *versus* Poison Gases

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

CIVILIZATION and luxury do not make for a beautiful, healthy development, hardihood, and long life. Vital statistics have made this assertion an absolute fact. In no particular is its truth more glaringly exemplified than in the manner in which we ventilate our houses.

In the good old days before steam heat, hot-air furnaces, and other modern methods of heating were employed, man depended for warmth mainly upon the heat generated within his own body—through the combustion of food and energy—heat—created by muscular activity—with an occasional wood fire to “take off the chill.” To-day we exclude as much fresh air from our homes during cold weather as we possibly can, by means of numerous devices for sealing doors and windows—weather strips, storm shutters—calking up all surbases, crevices, and so on, as well as by interlining the walls with asbestos and other materials that act as blankets to the interchange of gases.

To be healthily beautiful, we must breathe *fresh* air—oxygen—continuously. Now the shut-in atmosphere of our houses, besides being tainted with our own poisonous emanations, is also vitiated by poisonous gases from the various heating and lighting methods employed. The result is a great deficiency in oxygen, and this is largely re-

sponsible for a sickly pallor of the skin, for torpidity of the liver, sluggishness of the blood stream, and a general condition of underhealth and lack of vital, pulsating beauty.

*Oxygen alone supports life.* When the atmosphere is highly charged with an admixture of coal gases, the oxygen-carrying blood corpuscles are immediately affected; the blood is then gradually exhausted of its oxygen, asphyxia follows, and unless relief is prompt—death quickly ensues.

Carbon dioxide is one of the commonest of all gases. We are continuously producing it ourselves and giving it to the surrounding atmosphere; we are distressingly conscious of its presence in poorly ventilated places occupied by large gatherings of human beings. Within ourselves, combustion is the same thing as it is in many other processes of nature, wherever organic combustion, fermentation, and vegetable decay occur. Therefore, carbon dioxide accumulates in cellars where wines and vegetables are stored, in wells, pits, caves, mines, and in badly ventilated rooms where many lamps and gaslights burn.

It is estimated that, in a given time, a single gaslight of ordinary size gives rise to five or six times the amount of carbon dioxide exhaled by one human being. The household fire is another

important source of carbon dioxide; if the drafts are not properly used, and the room is poorly ventilated, enough carbon dioxide, as well as carbon monoxide, may be produced in a short time to prove actually dangerous.

Asphyxiation occurs, in the case of large fires, from smoke, which consists mainly of poison gases. Carbon monoxide is most commonly produced from the coal fires in grates, stoves, and furnaces, both domestic and industrial. Hence the care of furnaces on a large scale, and the proper heating and ventilating of plants and buildings housing large numbers of human beings, becomes a serious matter.

This powerfully poisonous gas—carbon monoxide—is a constant constituent of the products of combustion of carbonaceous matter, and while the poisonous action of charcoal, coke, or coal vapors is in part due to carbon dioxide, it is really chiefly due to that more poisonous gas, carbon monoxide, quantities of which accumulate above the fire in stoves and hot-air furnaces; so much, indeed, that on the opening of the door, an inrush of air will form an explosive mixture which, igniting, may produce serious accidents.

A large proportion of accidents are caused by leaving off the stove lids. This is a common habit in thousands of households in banking the fires for the night. The blue flame at the surface of the fire shows the presence of the gas. Carbon monoxide forms when gas flames impinge on a besooted surface, when lamps are turned low and gas logs or charcoal are burned at a slow rate. The fumes escaping from burners, braziers, portable stoves, and so on fill the living rooms with deadly gases, which, if they do not kill, seriously injure the health and make impossible human efficiency and beauty.

It is an undoubted fact, then, that all human beings inhabiting houses, suffer from a chronic form of gas poisoning.

We habitually breathe tainted air. Our rooms are poorly ventilated at *all* times, so that we breathe in our own emanations and the vitiated emanations of others, which consist largely of the poisonous gas, *carbon dioxide*.

To repeat, with the heating of our buildings and the burning of lamps and other means of lighting, the air becomes heavily charged with the more deadly gas, carbon monoxide, which, of course, we never inhale in its pure state, as its action is instantaneous. A single breath of this gas caused an experimenter to fall back as if struck by lightning. He recovered after fifteen minutes through timely aid. We occasionally hear of some startling and untoward happening resulting from the inhalation of poisonous coal vapors—as that of an entire church congregation overcome by furnace gas—and we all know the revolting effect produced on entering a close room occupied by a large number of human beings.

Occupants of poorly ventilated workshops are continually breathing tainted air, which to others is unbearable. However, we remain in ignorance of the chronic form from which we are all suffering somewhat. The general "malaise" and the headaches continually experienced during the winter months are unquestionably due, in most cases, to the presence of these gases. Other symptoms habitually complained of by those spending the greater part of their time in poorly ventilated rooms are chronic languor, sickly pallor, dull eyes, loss of appetite, coated tongue, indifference, lack of ambition, and mental dullness.

These symptoms spring, for the most part, from anemia, which is the most glaring condition caused by the continual inhalation of poisonous gases. Carbon dioxide renders arterial blood venous more rapidly than other gases; it displaces the oxygen content of the blood. When it is remembered that

the red blood corpuscles are the oxygen carriers, that *haematin*, the iron constituent of the blood, combines with oxygen, and that strength, vigor, and *beauty* depend upon a proper amount of oxyhaemoglobin, it will be seen how fatal to health, energy, and good looks is an insufficient supply of fresh air.

The test for determining the purity of air in a room is really very simple; if a measured ounce of lime water becomes turbid when shaken in a half-pint bottle, there is a slight excess of poisonous gas present, about 0.1 per cent. When the quantity reaches 0.5 per cent, most persons are attacked with languor and headache. When the gas reaches the proportion of one-twelfth of the whole volume of the air, suffocation occurs. On entering a room where rank air has been confined, giddiness, drowsiness, and loss of muscular power are quickly experienced. The drowsiness that overcomes one in a crowded audience is due to the presence of tainted vapors.

When the above symptoms are observed, windows and doors should be opened, so that currents of fresh air may sweep the atmosphere of poisonous gases.

Many fatalities occur when persons sleep in unventilated rooms that are, besides, heated with coal fires. Refreshing sleep in a close room is impossible. This accounts for the heavy, headachy condition experienced by so many persons in the morning.

America is said to be a nation of hot-house plants, because of the superheated atmosphere of its homes and the ease with which its people succumb to changes of temperature. The effect upon the skin of superheated air is precisely similar to that of a Russian or Turkish bath, which is taken for the purpose of relaxing the outer cuticle and inducing perspiration. It will now readily be seen why Americans suffer so much from nasal and bronchial ca-

tarrhs and why pneumonias—there are several kinds of pneumonia—claim so many more victims than in former years. Skin that is in a chronic state of relaxation leaks continuously; exposure to sudden atmospheric changes—a current of fresh air, cold air, a draft, even a gust of wind—chills the surface, drives the blood to the interior, and causes inflammation of the inner lining of the throat, nose, ear, bronchial tubes, lungs, in fact any internal structure.

Such conditions cannot and do not arise when the body is inured to cold, that is, when the atmosphere of the house is maintained at a low temperature—55 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit, 75 degrees for old, feeble persons and the sick—and the vitiated air constantly changed with currents of pure, fresh air. Houses should not be sealed so that there is no interchange of gases. All habitations, like their inmates, should be given ample opportunity to breathe; windows should be lowered from the top, air shafts should be wide open, skylights should be more generally used. These things are mentioned because warm air ascends, and in this manner poisonous gases and injurious organic matter is swept out with the continual inrushing of cold air from below.

Many persons will say they cannot possibly inure themselves to so low a temperature and to drafts of cold air. But this can be done even by those quite advanced in years—if they are robust. First, the skin must be strengthened and its tone markedly heightened. The skin, it will be remembered, is a vast organ, as important in the functions it performs as the lungs or the kidneys. Nothing is so powerfully tonic to the skin as a daily cold salt-water rubdown. One can begin with a shower from which the chill has been taken; then daily lower the temperature until the water is quite cold. From this



it is easy to swing into cold salt rub-downs. Those who are not obliged to temper the water at first can begin immediately with salt water from which the chill has been taken. One cupful of salt water to one gallon of water should be prepared the night before. Inasmuch as one's sleeping apartment should be thoroughly ventilated during the night, the water will be at the temperature of the room. If, then, on arising, the body is immediately doused from head to foot with coarse mitts plunged into the cold salt water, and briskly dried with coarse towels, it glows and tingles with a pleasurable warmth that metaphorically snaps its fingers at "colds." In fact, the simple advice given here is really a panacea for all forms of acute and chronic ailments tabulated under the word "colds."

The clothing worn next to the skin is another item of importance in this connection. Men are greater sinners in this respect than women. Woolen underwear habitually worn in superheated rooms is conducive to chronic ailments. Light-weight underwear is advised; indeed, light-weight clothing should always be worn indoors, even while one is accustoming oneself to the *great innovation herein urged*—namely, *fresh air, more fresh air, fresh air all the time in our houses.*

Those of sensitive habit can wear an

extra piece of clothing, when necessary, to protect themselves from drafts. If the temperature of the room is too low for comfort, make up for it by more physical activity, but do not shut yourself into a poisonous atmosphere under the belief that you are keeping your body comfortable.

At least one window in each room should be *lowered* from the top all the time. It is best to *raise* another window in the same room, for the reason already explained—that an inrush of air from below sweeps the poisoned air out above. Screens can be employed, when necessary, to cut off drafts. Those who can afford ventilators—so built that currents of air are directed upward on entering a room—are fortunate. Yet this form of ventilator is not essential; a windowpane can be removed—when small panes are used—and a piece of heavy bolting cloth inserted in its place. Last winter it required the terrible epidemic of influenza to drive home the need of more fresh air in our living quarters, yet it was a sad and noticeable fact that ventilators or air screens were employed only in the sick room and discarded when the supposed need for them no longer existed.

It is only by means of fresh air, and more fresh air, that we can cultivate and attain a *beautiful, healthy development.*

## WHAT READERS ASK

**JOHN SMITH.**—Your voracious appetite is merely nature's demand for a sufficient supply to nourish an overgrown lad. What you require is food that contains the essential elements for rapid growth. Take, in addition to your regular meals, at least two quarts of milk daily, one pint every four hours. Sip this slowly; do not gulp it down. Take plenty of time thoroughly to masticate and insalivate all your food. Digestion and assimilation are thereby immensely facilitated. Rest all you can. Do not exceed your strength. A list of blood-making foods is available to you on request.

**MIDDLE AGE.**—Yes, wrinkles can be eradicated. I do not refer to character lines, do you? A skin that has been well preserved should show no signs of age at middle life. Now, the treatment of wrinkles and sagging tissues takes up considerable space. I will gladly send you full directions, also the formula for a French balm for wrinkles, on receipt of a United States stamped, self-addressed envelope. No—I thoroughly disapprove of surgical treatment for the restoration of old faces. But I do know of a successful treatment for skin tightening pursued by a complexion expert in one of our East-

ern cities. If you wish to know about this, mention it in your letter, and I shall be glad to inform you.

KATHERINE JONES.—I do not advise the use of depilatories, as they cannot fail to stimulate the hair follicles to a heavier growth. Nevertheless, there are some measures, not precisely in the nature of a depilatory, with which my readers are now being acquainted, and regarding which I will be glad to inform you. On writing again, please state your request plainly and inclose a self-addressed, United States stamped envelope.

COURAGE.—You have my deepest sympathy. Rheumatoid conditions are still baffling scientists, so far as actual causes and treatment are concerned. Advanced thinkers no longer deride the avoidance of use of acid fruits in these diseases, because, by the act of digestion, they favor alkalinity of the blood. Foods containing a large amount of iodine are especially indicated in your trouble. Do you wish a list of such foods?

HAROLD B.—Professor Sabourand, the famous French skin specialist, believes that many causes of incurable eczema are due to the use of bread in the diet. He advises that in all cases of this kind, bread be eliminated absolutely. Now, since you have tried everything, and have had the best treatment, I would suggest that you put yourself upon a starch-free diet and see what that does. You will naturally lose weight upon such a diet, but that must not alarm you, and will not, if you attribute your loss of weight to the proper cause. If you desire, I will mail you the formula of a famous skin restorer, with directions for its use.

M. M. B.—You have in all probability been relying entirely upon laxatives, and have employed no hygienic measures, and no special diet, to help your intestinal tract to perform its function naturally. Of course, it is much easier to take a pill, but when one advances in years, and the intestinal tract has accustomed itself to rely upon a false stimulus, there is apt to be trouble. Therefore, I urge upon you a proper amount of exercise of the abdominal muscles; and to your daily diet the addition of coarse foods that will increase the waste and act as a broom to sweep out the intestinal contents. Among such coarse foods, *bran* heads the list; you should use at least a teaspoonful during the course of each twenty-four hours.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

LAVINA M.—In the July, 1915, number of this magazine an article appeared on "Local and General Reduction Cures." It covered fully your problem. It is true that by dieting you may lose weight where you want to retain it. The use of a reducing cream, and exercise suitable to the parts under consideration, is the only logical method of handling the situation. There are many *anti-fat* remedies advertised, none of which I can conscientiously recommend; there is one, that has also a good effect on the constitution in general, concerning which I will gladly give you further information if you will write me, inclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply.

HERBERT K.—I appreciate the great distress you are suffering from the old chronic varicose ulcer. You should have it surgically treated and cured. However, I am going to give you an excellent dressing for varicose veins and ulcers, the use of which will make you very much more comfortable. Here it is: Glycerine, 1 part; zinc oxide, 1 part; white gelatine, 1 part; water, 3 parts. Heat the gelatine in the water over a water bath until dissolved, then add the other ingredients. With a soft brush, apply several coats over the affected regions. This dressing is supporting as well as protective, and will afford you great relief.

LOLITA.—You are tall for your age, and are slightly overweight, but if your arms and neck are thin, your flesh cannot be evenly distributed. You require breathing exercises, and gentle massage with a fattening cream. I will send you a list of the former, and directions for making and using the cream, upon receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Your hips and legs probably need training down, so I advise purposeful walking from two to five miles daily, at the same time breathing deeply and swinging your arms. This will help to develop your neck and arms, while reducing your lower limbs.

HARRY B.—The treatment of boils is not as trifling as you seem to think. You require, besides local measures, modifications of the diet and general rules for conducting your health, which is a highly important matter. I will gladly send you the necessary data on receipt of a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Directions here would occupy too much space.

# New Oliver Typewriters At About Half Price

**Latest Model  
Number Nine**

**Was \$100  
Now \$57**

**FREE TRIAL—  
No Money Down  
Over a Year to Pay**



**Save \$43**

**By This New Plan—Be Your Own Salesman**

**The Guarantee of a \$2,000,000 Concern  
That This \$57 Typewriter Was \$100**

During the war we learned that it was unnecessary to have great numbers of traveling salesmen and numerous, expensive branch houses throughout the country. We were also able to discontinue many other superfluous, costly sales methods.

You benefit by these savings. The \$57 Oliver is the identical machine that was formerly \$100. Not one change has been made in design or materials. Each machine is a new Oliver 9—our latest and finest product.

## The \$100 Model

The Oliver Nine is the finest, the costliest, the most successful model we ever built. If any typewriter is worth \$100, it is this handsome machine, the greatest Oliver triumph.

Over 700,000 have been sold. This is the same commercial machine used by the U. S. Steel Corporation, the Standard Oil Company, the National City Bank of New York, Montgomery Ward & Co., the Pennsylvania Railroad, and a host of others. Any operator can use the Oliver.

## Free Trial; No Money Down

Here is our plan: We ship an Oliver Nine to you for five days free trial. No money down—no C. O. D. Use it in your office or at home. Try it—without anyone to influence you.

If you want to keep it, send us \$3 per month. If you want to send it back, we even refund the outgoing transportation charges.

That is the entire plan. You are the sole judge. At no time during the trial are you under the slightest obligation to buy. Superiority and economy alone must convince you.

## Amazing Facts

We have just published a startling book, entitled *The High Cost of Typewriters—The Reason and the Remedy*, which reveals the inside history of the typewriter world—old customs of selling—facts never before divulged—all about price in-

flation—subsidies, etc. All the follies of \$100 pricing are exposed. Readers are astounded.

Mail the coupon now. You will be surprised.

This book tells everything. With it we send our catalog, free trial order blanks, etc. After reading it, you may order a free-trial Oliver.

Canadian Price, \$72

(97.00)

## The Oliver Typewriter Co.

738 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

### THE OLIVER TYPEWRITER CO.

738 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

☐ Ship me a new Oliver Nine for five days free inspection. If I keep it I will pay \$57 at the rate of \$3 per month. The title to remain in you until fully paid for.

My shipping point is.....  
This does not place me under any obligation to buy. If I choose to return the Oliver, I will ship it back at your expense at the end of five days.

☐ Do not send a machine until I order it. Mail me your book—*"The High Cost of Typewriters—The Reason and the Remedy,"* your deluxe catalog and further information.

Name .....

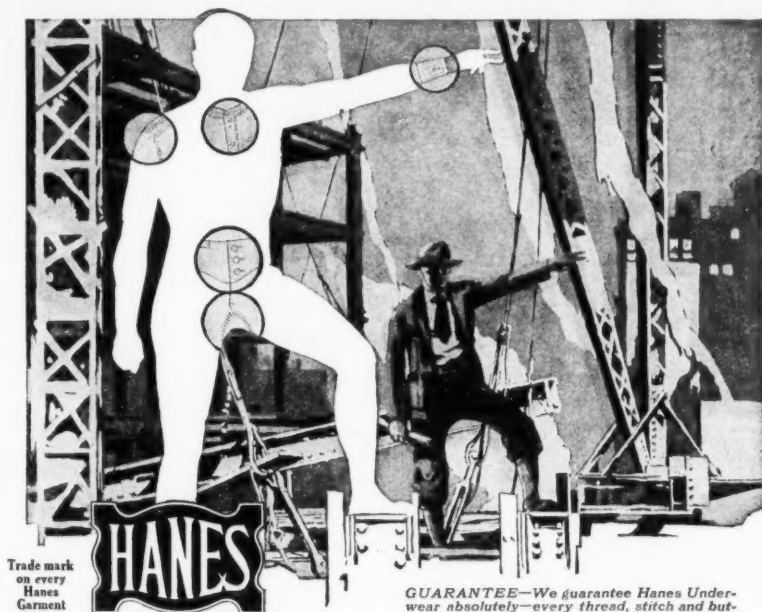
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**FREE  
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Trade mark  
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Hanes  
Garment

**HANES**

ELASTIC KNIT  
**UNDERWEAR**

**GUARANTEE**—We guarantee Hanes Underwear absolutely—every thread, stitch and button. We guarantee to return your money or give you a new garment if any seam breaks.

## Quality and care put into Hanes Underwear will astound any man!

**YOU'D** rate Hanes winter Men's Union Suits and Shirts and Drawers *sensational value* if you followed the bales of fine, long-staple cotton from the moment they entered the Hanes Plant until you saw Hanes Underwear packed into boxes for shipment all over the nation!

*What goes into Hanes in quality and workmanship comes out to you in extra-wear, extra-comfort, extra-warmth!* We tell you frankly that Hanes is the biggest underwear value ever sold at any price! *Prove our statement for your own satisfaction!*

Read every detail and compare with the circles in the diagram figure above, because you should understand what Hanes hands you: *Guaranteed* unbreakable seams, with reinforcements at buttonholes and at every strain point; elastic knit collarette that snugs up to the neck, preventing gaps; shape-holding elastic knit shoulders that "give and take"; durable, snug-fitting three-button sateen waistband; elastic knit wrists; pearl buttons sewed on to stay! Put behind that array of wear and comfort features Hanes perfect workmanship and *Hanes quality!*

Hanes Union Suits have never been near-equalled at the price. They have all the desirable features of Hanes Shirts and Drawers *with a closed crotch that stays closed!*

### "Hanes" Union Suits for Boys

are as wonderful value as our men's garments. To mothers and fathers Hanes boys' Union Suits are superb. Cozy, fleecy warmth and the finest workmanship put these boys' suits in a class distinct from all others. *They certainly do stand the wear and wash!*

See this Hanes Underwear at your dealer's. If he cannot supply you, write us immediately. *Any Hanes garment will outlive our guarantee!*

**P. H. HANES KNITTING CO., Winston-Salem, N. C.** New York Office 366 Broadway

**Warning to the Trade**—Any garment offered as "Hanes" is a substitute unless it bears the Hanes label.

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**KODAK** — the gift that helps to make her  
Christmas merry — then keeps a  
picture story of the Christmas merriment.

EASTMAN KODAK CO., ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City*

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# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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GOVERNMENT POSITIONS are desirable. Let our expert former Government Examiner prepare you. Write today for free booklet giving full information. Paterson Civil Service School, Box Y, Rochester, N.Y.

HOW MUCH GASOLINE CAN YOU SELL AT 2c. PER GALLON? World tests for four years to prove it. Secure exclusive rights for your county. "Carbonvoid," Box "2," Bradley Beach, N. J.

Railroad Traffic Inspectors: \$110.00 a month to start and expenses; travel if desired; unlimited advancement. No age limit. Three months' home study. Situation arranged. Prepare for permanent position. Write for booklet CM 28. Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

WANTED—5 bright, capable ladies to travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. \$25.00 to \$50.00 per week. Railroad fare paid. Write at once. Goodrich Drug Co., Dept. 70, Omaha, Nebr.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, furnishing everything; men and women \$30 to \$100 weekly operating our "Specialty Candy Factories" anywhere. Booklet free. Taggsdale Co., Box 98, East Orange, N. J.

BE A DETECTIVE. Excellent opportunity, good pay, travel. Write C. F. Ludwig, 438 West over Building, Kansas City, Mo.

SIDE-LINE SALESMEN—We have an attractive line of premium assortments for live salesmen. Commission from \$5.00 to \$20.00 per order. If you want an up-to-date line, write today. Canfield Mill Co., 4003 Broadway St., Chicago, Ill.

DETECTIVES EARN BIG MONEY. Travel. Great demand. We train you. Particulars free. Write, American Detective System, 1968 Broadway, N. Y.

WANTED—Railway Mail Clerks. Average \$117 month. Hundreds needed. Fall schedules free. Franklin Institute, Dept. L2, Rochester, N. Y.

AGENTS: A brand new hosiery proposition for men, women and children. Must wear 12 months or replaced free. All styles, colors and finest silk hose. You can sell at less than store prices. Every home a prospect. Write for samples. Thomas Hosiery Co., 3360 North St., Dayton, O.

WIDE AWAKE MAN TO TAKE Charge of our local trade. \$4.00 to \$5.00 a day steady. No experience required; pay starts at once. Write today. American Products Co., 1457 American Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

## Educational

Law—Normal—High School—Business—Civil Service Courses taught by mail. For "Free Tuition Plan," apply Carnegie College, Rogers, Ohio.

## Coins, Stamps, etc.

We Buy Old Money. Hundreds of dates worth \$2 to \$500 each. Keep all old money, you may have valuable coins. Get posted, send 1c for New Illustrated Buying Price List, size 4x8. Clarke Coin Co., Box 33, Le Roy, N. Y.

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PATENTS. Write for Free Illustrated Guide Book. Send model or sketch and description for free opinion of its patentable nature. Highest references. Prompt Attention. Reasonable Terms. Victor J. Evans & Co., 767 Ninth, Washington, D. C.

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## Motion Picture Plays

PHOTOPLAYS wanted. Big prices paid. Great demand. We show you how. Get free particulars. Rex Publishers, Box 175-P-2, Chicago.

\$50-\$100 weekly writing Moving Picture Plays. Get free book; valuable information; prize offer. Photo Playwright College, Box 278 X Y's, Chicago.

\$100 to \$500 Paid for Photoplay Plots and Ideas by leading producers. Big demand for acceptable scripts. Address Director of Brennen, Suite 315, 1433 Broadway, New York.

## Candy

CHERI Super-Chocolates Assorted lb. box \$1 P. P. pre-paid, insured. Best you ever tasted or the box with our compliments. Cheri, 142 S. 15th, Phila.

## Short Stories

WANTED—Stories. Articles, Poems for new magazine. We pay on acceptance. Typed or handwritten MSS. acceptable. Send MSS to Woman's Natl. Magazine, Desk 918, Wash., D. C.

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\$50 to \$150 A WEEK, writing stories. Previous acceptance not essential. Send for Special Free Offer. Department "S" New York Literary Bureau, 145 West 36th St., New York City.

## Duplicating Devices

"Modern" Duplicator—A Business Getter. \$1.50 up. 50 to 75 copies from pen, pencil, typewriter; no glue or gelatine. 40,000 firms use it. 3 days' trial. You need one. Booklet free. L. T. Durkin, Reeves & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

## Songs, Poems, etc.

Write a Song—Love, mother, home, childhood, patriotic or any subject. I compose music and guarantee publication. Send words today. Thomas Merlin, 222 Reaper Block, Chicago.

WRITE the Words for a Song. We write music and guarantee to secure publication. Submit poems on any subject. Broadway Studios, 139C Fitzgerald Building, New York.

WRITE words for a song. We write music, guarantee publisher's acceptance. Submit poems on patriotism, love or any subject. Chester Music Co., 920 S. Michigan Ave., Room 523, Chicago.

WRITE WORDS FOR A SONG—We write music, publish and secure copyright. Submit poems on any subject. The Metropolitan Studios, 914 S. Michigan Avenue, Room 120, Chicago.

SONG-WRITERS' GUIDE SENT Free. Contains valuable instructions and advice. Submit song-poems for examination. We will furnish music, copyright and facilitate publication or sale. Knickerbocker Studios, 301 Galety Bldg., New York.

DO YOU WANT YOUR SONG poems accepted? Send your poems today for best offer, immediate publication and free examination. Send writing booklet on request. Authors & Composers Service Co., Suite 530, 1431 Broadway, New York.

## Farm Lands

BIG MONEY in grains, livestock, fruit, poultry. Mich. best hardwood land. \$15 to \$30 per A. Easy terms. Markets, schools, churches. Free insurance. Farm advice free. No swamps or stones. 10 to 150 A. Best offer in U. S. from largest Co. Booklet free. Write today. Swigart Land Co., 12165 First Nat'l Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

OWN YOUR OWN Orange Grove in Beautiful Fruitland Park. Write today for information how you can own it on easy terms. Lake County Land Owner's Association, 321 Beauty Street, Fruitland Park, Florida.

## Oil Lands

OIL—OIL—OIL—Texas is in the midst of an oil boom that in many respects resembles the great Klondike gold booms. We offer you an unheard-of opportunity to participate in this wonderful boom. All it requires is a little red blood and \$10.00 to start you in the oil game. Write at once for particulars. W. B. Fowler and Company, Linz Bldg., Dallas, Texas.

## Business Opportunities

MEXICAN DIAMONDS flash like genuine, fool experts, stand tests, yet sell for 1-50th the price. Few live agents wanted to sell from handsome sample case; big profits, pleasant work. Write today. Mexican Diamond Imp't Co., Box CD 3, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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# Which job can you fill?

All these jobs were advertised in a single issue of a Chicago newspaper under "Help Wanted." Which one can you fill? There are good jobs like these with big pay everywhere for men capable of holding them. Why don't you get one? If you haven't the knowledge necessary to make you capable of holding down the best kind of a job, make up your mind right now to get it. There is a set of Home Study Books listed below that will quickly fit you to hold any job you want—spare time only is needed.

These books were written by some of the greatest experts in each line. Nothing but plain everyday English is used—thousands of pictures, diagrams and tables help to make everything as simple as A B C. You can't go wrong with these books before you—they explain everything you need to know. Pick out the set you want and see our Free trial offer below.

## Cut Prices on Practical Books

**Automobile Engineering**, 6 volumes, 2600 pages, 2000 pictures. Was \$30.00....Now \$19.80  
**Carpentry and Contracting**, 5 volumes, 2138 pages, 1000 pictures. Was \$25.00....Now \$19.80  
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**Machine Shop Practice**, 6 volumes, 2300 pages, 500 pictures. Was \$30.00....Now \$19.80  
**Fire Prevention and Insurance**, 4 volumes, 1500 pages, 600 pictures. Was \$20.00....Now \$15.80

**Steam and Gas Engineering**, 7 volumes, 7300 pages, 2500 pictures. Was \$35.00....Now \$21.80  
**Law and Practice** (with reading course), 13 vols., 6,000 pages, illus. Was \$75.00....Now \$44.50  
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**Sanitation, Heating, Ventilating**, 4 volumes, 1454 pages, 1400 pictures. Was \$20.00....Now \$14.80  
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# 7 Days' FREE TRIAL

We'll gladly send you any set of these books you want for seven days' free examination. Don't send us a cent. Just pay the small shipping charges when the books arrive. Examine them carefully. Use them at your work for an entire week. If you feel that the books are not worth more than we ask for them, send them back at our expense. If you keep them, pay only the bargain price on the easy terms explained below.

## 50c a Week

That's all you pay if you keep the books you select. Send \$2.00 within seven days and the balance of the out price at the rate of \$2.00 a month (50c a week). Did you ever hear of a more generous offer? Remember, you take no chance whatever—you don't pay us anything if you don't keep the books. **Mail the coupon NOW—before you turn this page.**

**AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. X-109, Chicago**

## Wanted

**Office Men**  
 Auditors, Accountants, Office Managers, Credit Men, Cashiers, Bookkeepers and Cost Clerks—\$1,500 to \$7,500 a year.

**Factory Men**  
 Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Factory Managers, Superintendents, Foremen, Designers and Draftsmen—\$1,500 to \$12,000 a year.

**Construction Men**  
 Civil and Structural Engineers, Transients, Construction Superintendents and Foremen, Estimators, Designers and Draftsmen—\$1,500 to \$10,000 a year.

**Trades**  
 Machinists and Toolmakers, Auto Repairers, Electricians, Stationary Engineers, Firemen, Plumbers, Carpenters, Pattern Makers and Telephone Men—\$1,500 to \$3,000 a year.



## EXTRA SPECIAL

A consulting membership in this society given **FREE** with each set of books—regular price of membership is \$12.00.

## SPECIAL DISCOUNT COUPON

American Technical Society, Dept. X-109, Chicago, U. S. A.

Please send me set of.....

.....  
 for 7 DAYS' examination, shipping charges collect. I will examine the books thoroughly, and, if satisfied, will send \$2 within 7 days and \$2 each month until I have paid the special price of \$..... If I decide not to keep the books I will return them at post expense at the end of one week. Title not to pass to me until the set is fully paid for.

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Please fill out all lines.

# No Money In Advance

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## Velvet Grip Hose Supporter

**"Sew-Ons"**  
can be quickly and  
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to any style of  
corset.

The unique  
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feature of the  
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ruthless ripping of  
silken hose threads.

Look for the Oblong  
Rubber Button—  
"The Button that  
Talks for Itself."

GEORGE FROST CO., MAKERS

BOSTON



Set in Solid Gold

**Send Your Name and We'll  
Send You a Lachnite**

**DON'T** send a penny. Send your name and finger size and say, "Send me a Lachnite mounted in a solid gold ring on 10 days' free trial. I will send it prepaid right to your home. When it comes merely deposit \$4.75 with the postman and then wear the ring for 10 full days. If you, or any of your friends can tell it from a diamond, send it back. But if you decide to buy it—send \$2.50 a month, until \$15.75 has been paid. **Write Today** Send your name now. Tell us which of the solid gold rings illustrated above you wish (ladies' or men's). Be sure to send your finger size.

Harold Lachman Co., 12 N. Michigan Ave., Dept. 1708, Chicago

## Indoors or out



Get the  
Drop on  
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**RIGOROUS** exercise, in-  
doors or out, is doubly  
beneficial when the slightest  
tendency to cough is pre-  
vented by Dean's Metho-  
lated Cough Drops. Get  
them anywhere.

Dean Medicine Company  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

# DEAN'S

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COUGH DROPS

## KILL THE HAIR ROOT

My method is the only way to prevent the hair from growing again. Easy, painless, harmless. No scars. Root let free. Write to-day enclosing 3 stamps. We teach beauty culture. D. J. Mahler, 861-P, Mahler Paris, Providence, R. I.



## Learn Auto and Tractor Business

Immense growth of the industry, following the war, has made greater demand than ever for garages and motor mechanics. Learn in 6 to 8 weeks. Same practical method, same enormous equipment we used during war to train thousands of soldier-mechanics for U. S. Army in 60 day courses. Free Book explains all. Write today.

BAHE AUTO & TRACTOR SCHOOL, KANSAS CITY, MO.

## You Have a Beautiful Face—But Your Nose?

**I**N this day and age attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you try to appear as attractive as possible for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "looks," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. **Permit no one to see you looking otherwise; it will injure your welfare!** Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life—which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new Nose-Shaper "TRADOS" (Model 24) corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation quickly, safely and permanently. Is pleasant and does not interfere with one's daily occupation, being worn at night.

Write today for free booklet, which tells you how to correct Ill-Shaped Noses without cost if not satisfactory.

**M. TRILETY, Face Specialist, 1336 Ackerman Bldg., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.**

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# PRINCE ALBERT

*the national Christmas joy smoke*

**D**OUBLE quick as he kicks out of the coverlids at-peep-of-day on the twenty-fifth, pass him a whack on the back, a peppy "Merry Christmas—and—the smokesurprise of his life!—a pound of Prince Albert in that joy'us crystal glass humidor!

Talk about "happy returns!" If you're kind-of-keen to glimpse the sunshine dividends doing the happy-hob-nob with the mistletoe, land on one of these radiant holiday handouts—Prince Albert all fussed up like a gold fish out for a strut in the holly woods!

Never was such Christmas, or all-year, smokejoy as Prince Albert puts across to any man keyed for the pleasure punch of a jimmy pipe or home-rolled cigarettes! Never was such a glad-man-gift! P. A. is not only the sky-limit in smoke-delight-quality, but, get it right, our exclusive patented process cuts out bite and parch! Prince Albert has won by a mile all over the nation—it will win him!

*Prince Albert is also sold in handsome pound and half pound tin humidors in tidy red tins and in toppy red bags.*

**R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY, Winston-Salem, N. C.**

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R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

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# Xmas Bargains On Credit New Catalog Sent

MILLER-HOOPER **FREE**



No. M 105—Open face, 21 jewel, adjusted to 2 positions, Duober Hampden Railroad Watch, complete in 2-year gold case—Price \$47.50.



No. M 106—Solid 10K Gold—Horse shoe Scarf Pin—Price \$1.40.



No. M 108—Men's Fimo Diamond Ring, 14K Solid Gold mounting—Price \$47.50.



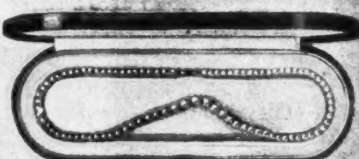
No. M 107—10K Gold—Horse shoe Scarf Pin—Price \$1.00.



No. M 109—Brooch, Blue Sapphire, Solid 10K Gold—Price \$1.85.



No. M 110—Brooch, Green Gold Leaf—Solid 10K Gold—Price \$1.85.



No. M 111—Indestructible Pearl Necklace, 15 inches long, beautifully graduated, solid 10K Gold Clasp—Price \$10.00. Other sizes and grades shown in our catalogue up to \$75.00.

## SQUARE DEAL MILLER SMASHES THE TERMS

Easiest and most reasonable terms offered. Purchase any article in my FREE CATALOG on the easiest possible terms. Xmas articles from 25c. up to any price. Now is the time to order Xmas articles. Buy today and pay next year. Terms and prices will suit you. Order from this Ad. Send for catalog.

Mail this Coupon—Send Today  
**SQUARE DEAL MILLER, Pres.**

Miller-Hooper Co., 1128 Miller Bldg., Detroit, Mich.  
Please send Free Catalog—Approval and Trial Offers

Name.....  
Address.....

## Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, published monthly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1919:

State of New York, County of New York, (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is Treasurer of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publishers, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; editor, Charles A. MacLean, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; managing editors, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; business managers, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Smith Publishing House, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., a firm, composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Cora A. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

GEORGE C. SMITH, Treasurer.

of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 20th day of September, 1919, Francis S. Duff, Notary Public, No. 239, New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1921.)

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or any watch you want. Easy Payments and 30 days Free Trial. Send for Big

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by old established Chicago Concern. We furnish full stock of goods, advertising matter, and equip store completely. In good location, all at our expense. We allow you to draw out \$175 a month and will also pay you liberal share of the profits your store earns. Work may be started in spare time. No investment or previous experience necessary. If you are a more a year, we want you, and will pay you well from the start. Send your application today. S. Levy, Manager, Dept. 819-329 S. Franklin St., Chicago, Ill.

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Seven Genuine Diamonds in Beautiful Cluster. Looks like 25. Ct. Stone. Unpaid Loss Price . . . \$75

Prices at even 40 per cent more.

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Just send your name today for our De Luxe

Book "The Better Way to Buy Diamonds."

It will save you 40% to 60% on Diamonds,

Watches, and Jewelry. Write NOW!

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Pay only if pleased. No

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Blue White Solitaires,

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15 Ct. Unpaid

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## BIG MONEY, RAISE RABBITS FOR US



Belgian, New Zealand, Flemish Giants. We sell stock and pay \$7.00 pair. Express all rabbits raised from our "Pure Bred Stock"—Our Expense. Contract and literature—10c. No Stamps. NONE FREE.

UNITED FUR AND PRODUCE CO., Inc.

Dept. 15 3017 Wilson Ave., Chicago, Ill.



## HERE'S YOUR CHANCE

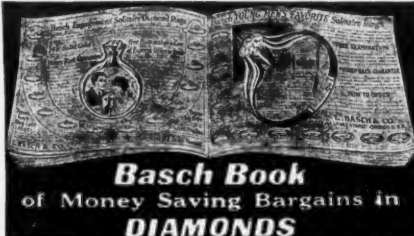
This 5 Passenger, 4 cylinder, 37 H. P. BUSH Car—Timken Bearings

Willard Batteries—2 Unit Starting & Lg.—116-inch wheel base.

Write at once for the best Automobile Offer in existence—Don't wait—Cars guaranteed or money back.

BUSH MOTOR CO., Bush Temple, Chicago, Illinois

Address: J. W. Bush, President, Dept. P190



## Basch Book of Money Saving Bargains in DIAMONDS

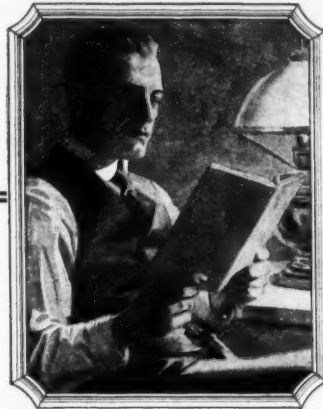
See the money saving diamond bargains which the great house of Basch still offers in this book, in spite of rising prices. As

sent at \$4.75; 4 sent at \$7.50. Free examination. Money back guarantee.

Write Get this book; see what Basch offers before you buy a diamond. Big bar-

gains in jewelry and watches, too. A postal brings it free. Write today.

L. Basch & Co., Dept. P195 State and Quincy Street, Chicago, Ill.



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"Every hour I spent on my I. C. S. Course has been worth \$95 to me! My position, my \$5,000 a year income, my home, my family's happiness—I owe it all to my spare time training with the International Correspondence Schools!"

Every mail brings letters from some of the two million I. C. S. students telling of promotions or increases in salary as the rewards of spare time study.

What are you doing with the hours after supper? Can you afford to let them slip by unimproved when you can easily make them mean so much? One hour a day spent with the I. C. S. will prepare you for the position you want in the work you like best. Yes, it will! Put it up to us to prove it. Mark and mail this coupon now!

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Explain, without obligating me, how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject, before which I mark X.

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# DIAMONDS


## ON CREDIT

**AN EXTRA \$100,000 in Diamonds**  
For This Big Sale  
**\$50 \$75 Up to \$200**

**THIS is a Big Special**  
Purchase, made for spot cash from an importer who is old and quitting business. The values are simply wonderful! We give you the benefit of our big saving. Every Diamond is a beauty, backed by a written guarantee. We don't need to tell you that Diamonds are going up, up! This is a rare opportunity for you to double your investment.

**Send No Money** but write today for this Month's Special Bulletin. Do this now! Have your gift ready for Christmas. Every selection sent on **Approval**. Easy Monthly Payments, or **cash** off for cash. Our 20 years' square dealing behind every transaction.

**HARRIS-GOAR COMPANY**  
Dept. 656 Kansas City, Mo.

## Bud Cigarettes

Plain or Cork Tip. Made of selected Pure Turkish Tobacco, with a distinctive blend which is appreciated by smokers of discrimination and taste. 100 Bud Cigarettes securely packed in Mahogany Wood Boxes. Send us \$2.00 for a box of 100. Sent postpaid to any address. The Bud Cigarette Company, 2 Rector Street, New York City.

**1/2 Price \$2.50**  
**SEND NO MONEY**  
If You Can Tell it from a GENUINE DIAMOND Send it back



To prove that our blue-white MEXICAN DIAMOND closely resembles the finest genuine South African Diamond (costing 50 times as much), with same DAZZLING RAINBOW FIRE, (Guaranteed 20 yrs.) we will send this Indian Solitaire Ring with one carat gem, (Catalogue price \$4.50) for Mail Price to introduce, \$2.50, plus War Tax 15c. Same thing but cents. Heavy Tooth Belcher Ring, (Catalogue price \$6.50) for \$3.10, plus War Tax 15c. Mountings are our finest 12 karat gold fillet. Mexican Diamonds are GUARANTEED FOR 20 YEARS. SEND NO MONEY. Just mail postcard or this ad., state size and we will mail at once C. O. D. If not fully pleased, return in 2 days for MONEY BACK, less handling charges. Act quick; offer limited; only one to a customer. Write for FREE Catalog. AGENTS WANTED.

**MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING CO.**  
Dept. FW Las Cruces, N. Mex.  
(Exclusive controllers Mexican Diamonds)

## FREE \$20

### TENOR BANJO

Ukulele, Hawaiian Guitar, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Cornet or Banjo

Wonderful new system of teaching note music by mail. To first pupils in each locality, we give a \$20 superb Violin, Mandolin, Ukulele, Guitar, Hawaiian Guitar, Cornet, Tenor Banjo or Banjo absolutely free. Very small charge for lessons only. We guarantee success or no charge. Complete outfit free. Write now. No obligation.

**SINGERLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC, Inc.** Dept. 35 CHICAGO, ILL.




## DO YOU LIKE TO DRAW?

Cartoonists are well paid. We will not give you any grand prize if you answer this ad. Nor will we claim to make you rich in a week. But if you are anxious to develop your talent with a successful cartoonist, so you can make money, send a copy of this picture, with \$c. in stamps for portfolio of cartoons and sample lesson plate, and let us explain.

**THE W.L. EVANS SCHOOL OF CARTOONING**  
835 Leader Building, Cleveland, Ohio

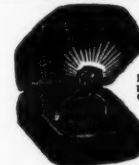
**FREE BOOK**



## Learn Piano!

### This Interesting Free Book

shows how you can become a skilled player of piano or organ in your own home, at one-quarter usual cost. Dr. Quinn's famous Written Method is endorsed by leading musicians and heads of State Conservatories. Successful years. Play chords at once and complete piece in every key, within 4 lessons. Scientific yet easy to understand. Fully illustrated. For beginners or teachers, older or young. All music free. Diploma granted. Write today for 64-page free book, "How to Learn Piano." M. L. Quinn Conservatory, Studio A1, Special Union Bldg., Boston, Mass.



## FREE DIAMOND RING OFFER

Just to advertise our famous Hawaiian 10c diamond—the greatest discovery the world has ever known. We will send absolutely free this 1 1/2 gold r. ring, set with a 1.00 Hawaiian 10c diamond—in beautiful ring box postpaid. For non-refundable \$1.00 C. O. D. charges to cover postage, boxing, advertising, handling, etc. If you can tell it from a real diamond return and money refunded. Only 10,000 given away. Send no money. Answer quick. Send one of these.

**KRAUTH & REED, Dept. 41**  
MASONIC TEMPLE CHICAGO

BOUND VOLUMES OF SMITH'S MAGAZINE now ready. PRICE, \$3.00 per volume. Address Subscription Department, STREET & SMITH CORPORATION, 73-93 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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USEFUL SUBJECTS 10c. EACH  
Sheldon's Twentieth Century Letter Writer; Sheldon's Guide to Etiquette; Physical Health Culture; National Dream Book; Zingara Fortune Teller; The Key to Hypnotism; Heart Talks With the Lovelorn; Frank Merriwell's Book of Physical Development.

**Street & Smith Corporation, Publishers**  
79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City

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# DIAMONDS

**PAY AS YOU LIKE**

**ROYAL Christmas Gifts**

Get the pick of the market and the biggest values for your money by shopping NOW in the ROYAL Catalog. No more marvelous selection of beautiful, appropriate Gifts was ever shown than the Diamonds, Watches and Jewelry it pictures and describes.

**YOUR CREDIT IS GOOD**

We will ship you ANY ARTICLE for Free Examination and open a regular Charge Account with you. Settle later, as convenient—monthly or weekly. Liberty Bonds accepted.

**10 MONTHS' TIME**

Don't buy a single Christmas Present until you post yourself on our ONE-PROFIT PRICES. We buy in the world's Diamond Markets and sell to you DIRECT—all middlemen cut out. We want you to SEE our goods and LEARN our prices.

**SEND FOR THE ROYAL CATALOG**

It's like a walk through a wonder world. Brilliant, perfectly cut, high quality Diamonds; solid gold Watches with works by world-renowned makers; Jewelry in the latest patterns, daintiest designs and wondrous workmanship. Every article GUARANTEED First Quality in every respect.

Write for FREE Catalog TODAY. Ask for Edition 91.

2212 \$29 4241 \$70 1393 \$19

## ROYAL DIAMOND & WATCH CO.

ESTABLISHED 1895

35 MAIDEN LANE - NEW YORK

# The Slave

With all her strength she fought to get away from it all—the vulgar cabaret—the mysterious beauty parlor—the underground drinking-hell. Fiercely she had refused every bribe—resisted every temptation. And yet, when there came the chance to escape, she turned her back to it and stayed.

It is a plot so exciting—so marvelously planned—so brilliantly solved—that it could have been written only by the master detective.

**CRAIG KENNEDY**  
(The American Sherlock Holmes)  
**ARTHUR B. REEVE**  
(The American Conan Doyle)



# Don't Wear a Truss



**BROOKS' APPLIANCE**, the modern scientific invention, the wonderful new discovery that relieves rupture will be sent on trial. No obnoxious springs or pads. Has automatic Air Cushions. Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No lies. Durable, cheap. Sent on trial to prove it. Protected by U. S. patents. Catalogue and measure blanks mailed free. Send name and address today.

Brooks Appliance Co., 212 C State St., Marshall, Mich.

# Rémoh Gems



Look and wear like diamonds. Brilliance guaranteed forever. Stand fire, acid and fire like diamonds. Have no paste, foil or backing. Set only in 14 karat solid gold mountings. About 1/10th the price of diamonds. A marvelous synthetic gem—will cut glass. Guaranteed not an imitation, and to contain no glass. Sent C.O.D. subject to examination. Write today for our illustrated catalog. It's free.

Rémoh Jewelry Co., 812 Washington Ave., St. Louis, Mo.



**Soothe Your Itching Skin With Cuticura**

All druggists. Soap 25. Ointment 25 & 50. Talcum 25. Sample each free of "Cuticura, Dept. B, Boston."

# FREE 10 Volumes POE

To those who send the coupon promptly, we will give FREE, a set of Edgar Allan Poe's masterpieces in 10 volumes. When the police of Paris failed to solve one of the most fearful murder mysteries of the time Edgar Allan Poe—far off here in New York—found the solution—the story is in one of these volumes.

This is a wonderful combination. Here are two of the greatest writers of mystery and scientific detective stories. You can get the Reeve at a remarkably low price and the Poe FREE.

Name..... Address..... Occupation.....

HARPER & BROTHERS  
Est. 1817, New York

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# Auto Buyers' Guide!

## *Free to readers of Street & Smith Publications*

The purpose of this department is to help our readers decide that most important question of all, "Which car shall I buy?"

It isn't a question any more of affording a car, but of which one is best fitted for your needs, most practical and will afford you the most enjoyment and cause you the least trouble.

Probably you have considered one or more of the machines listed below. If you have put a check mark in the space after your choice. Or, if you are not familiar with the different prices, let us know just about how much you want to invest in a car, seating capacity, whether you prefer a roadster or touring car, power, etc. We will then get in touch with the manufacturer and have complete information mailed you.

....Allen	....Empire	....Mercer	....Premier
....Apperson	....F. I. A. T.	....Mitchell	....Regal
....Auburn	....Ford	....Moline Knight	....Reo
....Briscoe	....Franklin	....Moon	....Roamer
....Buick	....Haynes	....Nash	....Saxon
....Bush	....Hudson	....National	....Scripps - Booth
....Cadillac	....Hupmobile	....Oakland	....Simplex
....Chalmers	....Jordon	....Oldsmobile	....Stearns
....Chandler	....Kissel Kar	....Overland	....Studebaker
....Chevrolet	....Lexington	....Owen Magnetic	....Stutz
....Daniels-8	....Locomobile	....Packard	....Vellie
....Dodge	....Marmon	....Paige	....Willys Knight
....Elgin	....Maxwell	....Peerless	....Winton Six
		....Pierce Arrow	

There is no charge for this service. You place yourself under no obligations either to us or to the manufacturer. Our sincere purpose is to help you arrive at an economical and logical decision as to which car is best fitted for your needs and we suggest if you are considering the difficult problem "Which car shall I buy?" that you fill out the attached coupon and mail it to us.

**STREET & SMITH CORPORATION, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City**

Please mail me information about the car I have checked or advise me on the inclosed questions. It is understood there is absolutely no charge or obligation incurred in this service.

Name .....  
 Street .....  
 City ..... State .....

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# DIAMONDS

## CHARGE ACCOUNT PLAN

**Special No. 37**  
1ct  
Lyon Round Belcher  
Cluster: Platinum Set  
Blue-White Matched,  
Blue-White Gemo, Looks  
like \$100 in Billions  
Special Price, \$27.50

**Special No. 38**  
Lyon Round Cluster: 7  
Pm. Blue-White, perfect  
to Matched Diamonds Set  
in Platinum. Looks like  
large \$150 Diamond  
Special Price, \$29.50

**Special No. 39**  
Lyon Round Cluster:  
Perfectly Matched  
Blue-White Diamonds  
Set in Platinum. Looks  
like single \$450 Diamond  
Special Price, \$22.50

### Do Your Christmas Shopping Early

Select all your Diamond and Jewelry gifts from our Catalog **86G**. Send your order to us for prompt shipment. Your credit is good. We trust you for all the things you want on the

**Lyon Charge-Account-Plan**  
You pay nothing in advance—nor one cent. Shipments are made at our expense and risk. You examine first, and only after satisfied, you send 20% as first payment. Then, send only 10% monthly, at the rate of a few cents a day. You get full protection under our

**8% Yearly Dividend Offer**  
Every "Lyon" Diamond is backed by our binding guarantee, covering the quality and value, **MORE** than that. On the exchange of any "Lyon" Diamond for a larger one, you get **8% YEARLY INCREASE IN VALUE—8% per annum MORE** than what you paid.

**Our 75 Years' Reputation**  
guarantees you honest goods at lowest prices. If our goods don't represent **SUPERIOR VALUE**, return at our expense. No obligation, annoyance or red tape. You don't pay a cent until you are pleased beyond your expectations. Send to Dept. **86G** for our 128-page Special Christmas Bargain Catalog. Investigate our **REMARK-ABLE OFFER**. Let us explain how you can earn an **EXTRA BONUS**.

**SPECIAL CASH DISCOUNT OF 15% FOR THIS MONTH ONLY.**

## J.M. LYON & CO.

1 MAIDEN LANE  
NEW YORK

In Business for over 75 Years

# You Can Do It

## In Your Spare Time

# We Guarantee You SUCCESS

**SUCCESS** means bettering your position, pay and prospects.

Getting on, getting promotion, means knowing a little more than the other fellow. Being able to think and act for yourself—having a grip on your task—that's the stuff that doubles and trebles your pay. You can do this—do it without a doubt—and we'll guarantee it. No matter what line you follow, we can give you the right grip on your job—the grip that boosts your earning power. We've put thousands in better positions, and we can put **YOU**.

### Don't Pass Up Promotion

Settle the question now: Do you want to get ahead? You do. Then give us the privilege of pushing you ahead. Our guarantee below insures satisfaction. It is your guarantee of success. You can't lose a cent—except by refusing to look this fact in the face: **YOU CAN ONLY SUCCEED BY TRAINING.**

### Read This Guarantee—Then Act!

"We guarantee at any time during the first year of your enrollment to refund the entire amount paid if immediately upon the completion of ten examinations you notify the School that you are not satisfied with your Course."

**AMERICAN SCHOOL of**  
Correspondence  
Dept. C-49  
CHICAGO



TRAINING—THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Please send me booklet and tell me how I can fit myself for the position marked X

ASL

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| ..... High School Graduate             | ..... Steam Engineer                          |
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| ..... Draftsman and Designer           | ..... Cert. Public Accountant                 |
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| ..... Structural Engineer              | ..... Wireless Operator                       |
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Name .....

Address .....

### PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM

Removes Dandruff—Stops Hair Falling—Restores Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair  
Bischox Chem. Wks. Patchogue, N. Y.

### HINDERCORNS

Removes Corns, Calluses, etc., stops all pain, ensures comfort to the feet, makes walking easy. Use by mail or at Drugists. Bischox Chemical Works, Patchogue, N. Y.

## "GETTING AHEAD"

is the fascinating story of a man who accumulated \$10,000 in ten years, by systematic investing in high-grade listed stocks and bonds. Amount invested averaged \$25 monthly. "Getting Ahead" contains nothing for the man who wants to get rich in a hurry, but will be helpful to all who wish to save from \$5 to \$100 monthly and invest by a safe method.

We sell all high-grade stocks and bonds listed on the New York Stock Exchange and other reliable exchanges, on convenient monthly payments. Send for "Getting Ahead." It explains the plan.

## KRIEBEL & CO.

INCORPORATED  
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143K South La Salle Street, Chicago

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**Loftis Bros. & Co.**

# DIAMONDS WATCHES

## ON CREDIT

ESTABLISHED 1858

**Select Your Christmas Gifts from Our Jewelry Catalog. Send for it Today.**

Our Diamonds are distinctive in beauty, of great brilliancy, set in the latest fashionable Solid Gold Mountings.



**The Best Gift of All**

**We Prepay Shipping Charges**

We are offering wonderful values in Diamond Rings, special for Christmas presents, at \$25, \$50, \$75, \$100, \$125. Credit terms, one-fifth down, balance in eight equal amounts, payable monthly. See Catalog.

### Suggestions for Christmas Presents

Diamond Rings, Solitaire \$25 up	Diamond Cuff Links \$5 up
Loftis Solitaire Diamond \$50 up	Diamond Scarf Pins \$3 up
Cluster Rings \$100 up	Wrist Watches \$22 up
Diamond La Vallieres \$70 up	Watches, gold filled \$10 up
Diamond Brooches \$7 up	Cameo Rings, Diamond-set \$12 up
Diamond Ear Screws \$25 up	Diamond-set Vest Chains, solid gold \$12 up
Diamond Studs \$10 up	

Send for Catalog, make selections, and have as many articles as you wish charged in one account. We can fill any requirement. Liberty Bonds Accepted.

**EVERY ARTICLE IN OUR CATALOG** is specially selected and priced **unusually low**. Whatever you select will be sent prepaid by us. You see and examine the article right in your own hands. If satisfied, pay one-fifth of purchase price and keep it, balance divided into eight equal amounts, payable monthly. Splendid bargains in 25-year guaranteed **WATCHES** on credit terms as low as **\$2.80 A MONTH**. To the Cash Buyer! While our prices are lower than the cash prices of other concerns, we make a discount of eight per cent for cash in full in advance, or on delivery.

**We Have Been in Business Over 60 Years**

**LOFTIS BROS. & CO.**  
THE NATIONAL CREDIT JEWELERS  
Dept. 6222 108 N. State St., Chicago, Ill.  
STORES IN LEADING CITIES

**It's that "extra blanket" at night**

Because Piso's brings comfort in midnight hours to those annoyed by coughs and distressed by inflamed throats or hoarseness. A standby for 55 years. Have it handy in the medicine cabinet for use at the very first indication of throat troubles.

*30c at your druggist's. Contains no opiate. Good for young and old*

# PISO'S

## for Coughs & Colds

# AK

**TABLETS**  
FOR  
**Grippe  
Cold  
in the  
Head**

**Headaches  
Neuralgias  
Spanish Influenza  
Women's Aches and Ills  
Rheumatic and Sciatic Pains**

**Ask Your Druggist for A-K Tablets**  
(If he cannot supply you, write us.)

**Small Size**

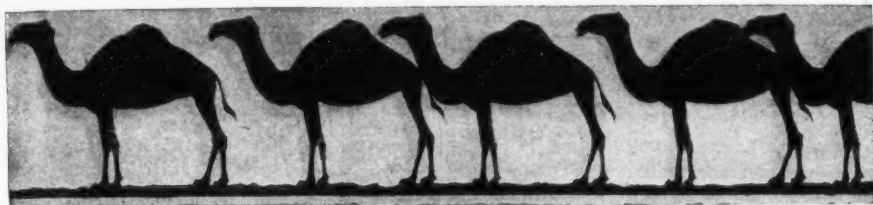
**10c**



**Dozen Size**

**25c**

**See Monogram AK on the Genuine**  
The Authentic Remedy Company, St. Louis, Mo.  
**Write for Free Samples**



**CAMELS** are unique—a real cigarette revelation! That's due to their quality and to the unusual and expert blend of choice Turkish and choice Domestic tobaccos!

Camels are sold everywhere in scientifically sealed packages of 20 cigarettes; or ten packages (200 cigarettes) in a glassine-paper-covered carton. We strongly recommend this carton for the home or office supply or when you travel.

**R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company**  
Winston-Salem, N. C.

**Y**OUR enthusiasm for Camel Cigarettes will steadily increase! They will not tire your taste, no matter how liberally you smoke! And, each cigarette will just add a little more to the joy and contentment the wonderfully refreshing Camel flavor hands you so lavishly!

Once you know Camels you'll prefer their blend—and what it gives you—the most fascinatingly mellow-mild-body ever realized in a cigarette—to either kind of tobacco smoked straight!

You'll enjoy Camels freedom from any unpleasant cigarettey aftertaste and from any unpleasant cigarettey odor!

And, the longer you smoke Camels the more you'll appreciate that they are made to meet your taste!

Compare Camels with any cigarette in the world at any price—and forget coupons, premiums and gifts!



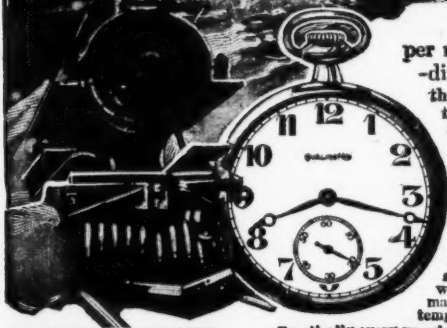
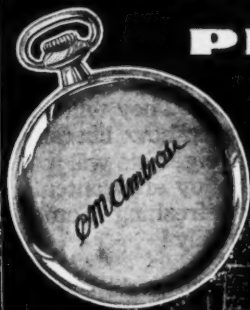
# Camel

## CIGARETTES

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# Our 21 Jewel SMASHES PRICES



## Look!

- Q 21 Ruby and Sapphire Jewels—
- Q Adjusted to the second—
- Q Adjusted to temperature—
- Q Adjusted to isochronism—
- Q Adjusted to positions—
- Q 25-year gold strata case—
- Q Genuine Montgomery Railroad Dial—
- Q New Ideas in Thin Cases.

# Only \$3<sup>50</sup> A Month

And all of this for \$3.50—only \$3.50 per month—a great reduction in watch prices—direct to you—positively the exact prices the wholesale dealer would have to pay. Think of the high-grade, guaranteed watch we offer here at such a remarkable price. And, if you wish, you may pay this price at the rate of \$3.50 a month. Indeed, the days of exorbitant watch prices have passed.

## See It First

You don't pay a cent to anybody until you

see the watch. You don't buy a Burlington Watch without seeing it. Look at the splendid beauty of the watch itself. This model, handsomely shaped—aristocratic in every line. Then look at the works! There you will see the masterpiece of the watch makers' skill. A perfect timepiece adjusted to positions, temperature and isochronism.

Practically every vessel in the U. S. Navy has many Burlington watches aboard. Some have over 100 Burlingtons. The victory of the Burlington among the men in the U. S. Navy is testimony to Burlington superiority.

## Send Your Name on This Free Coupon

Get the Burlington Watch Book by sending this coupon now. You will know a lot more about watch buying when you read it. You will be able to "steer clear" of the over-priced watches which are no better. Send the coupon today for the watch book and our offer.

### Burlington Watch Co.

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Canadian Office: 325 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Please send me (without obligation and prepaid) your free book on watches with full explanation of your cash or \$1.00 a month offer on the Burlington Watch.

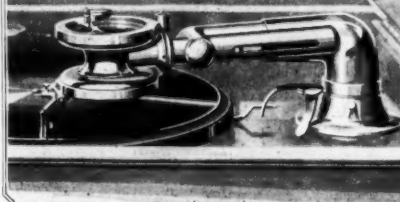
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



# The BRUNSWICK

## Method of Reproduction



*The Ultona*

### Achieving the Ultimate in Phonograph Music

*By Means of Two Exclusive and Scientific Features*

The Brunswick Method of Reproduction gained instant and wide-spread public favor because it enriches the tone qualities of all records. For this alone it is adored by artists and approved by the hypercritical. It embodies the true principles of tone reproduction and complies with the established laws of acoustics in projecting tone.

Two revolutionary factors, among others essentially different from other phonographs, make this possible. They are the Ultona and the Tone Amplifier.

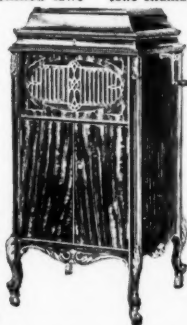
#### The Ultona Plays All Records

The Ultona—a product of creative genius—enables one to play all make records on the Brunswick. Not a combination contrivance nor complex mechanism, yet involving a fundamental principle of sound. By a slight turn of the hand it

supplies the proper needle, correct weight and precise diaphragm.

#### The Amplifier Enriches Tones

As the name implies it amplifies tone, making it truer and sweeter. It is a vibrant tone chamber like the sounding board of a fine piano or violin. Constructed entirely of moulded hollywood and free from metal it gives the requisite resiliency for unfolding and projecting true tone.



#### Ask to Hear The Brunswick

Any Brunswick dealer will be glad to demonstrate the many claims made for it. Choose your favorite record to be tested—the one that will help you judge best. Your verdict like that of unnumbered thousands will be "the one super phonograph."

THE BRUNSWICK-BALKE-COLLENDER COMPANY

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Branch Houses in Principal Cities of United States, Mexico and Canada

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# Chesterfield

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— satisfy"*



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